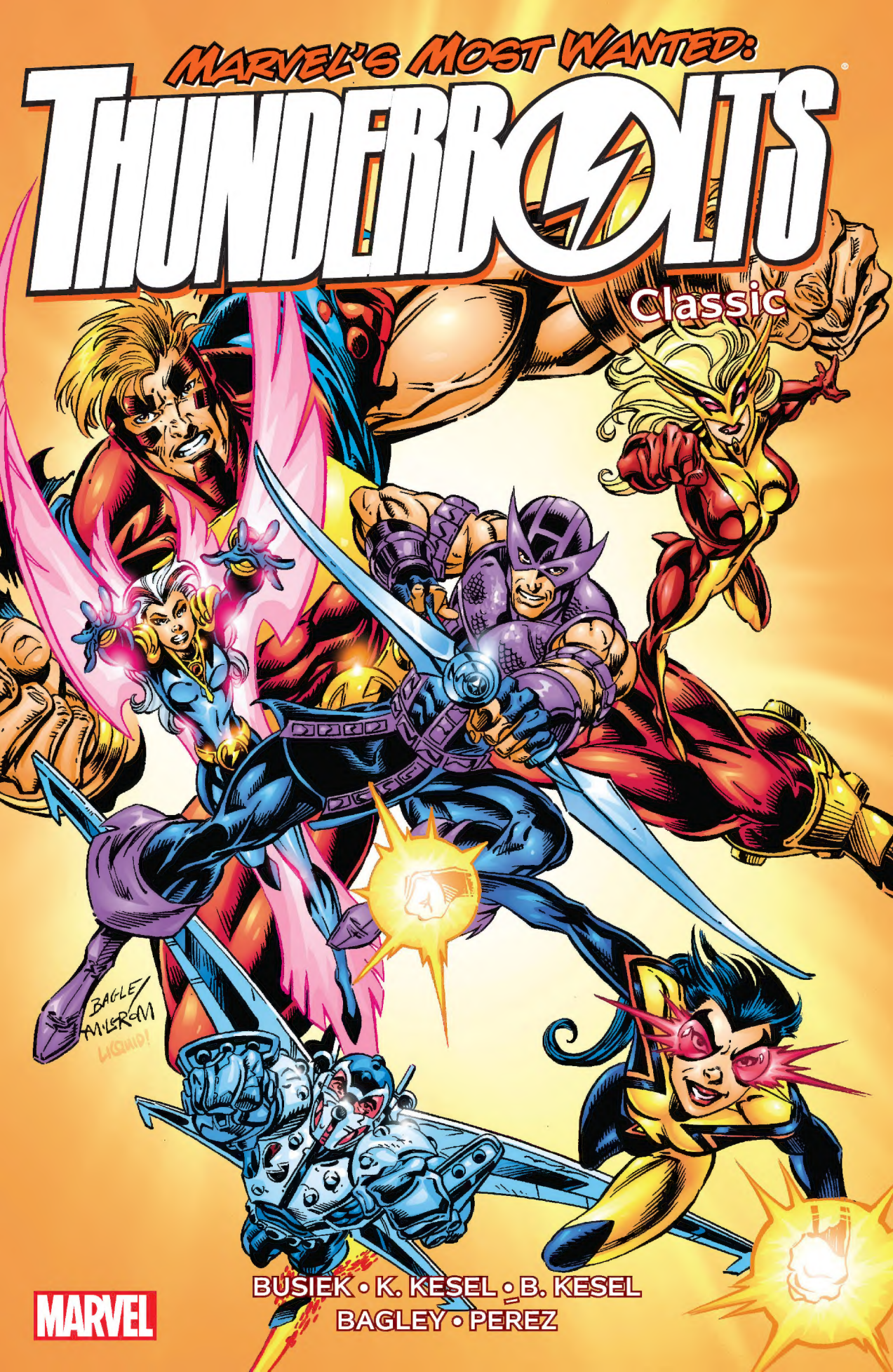
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
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MARVEL'S MOST WANTED: THUNDERBOLTS

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MARVEL COMICS
JUN
#15
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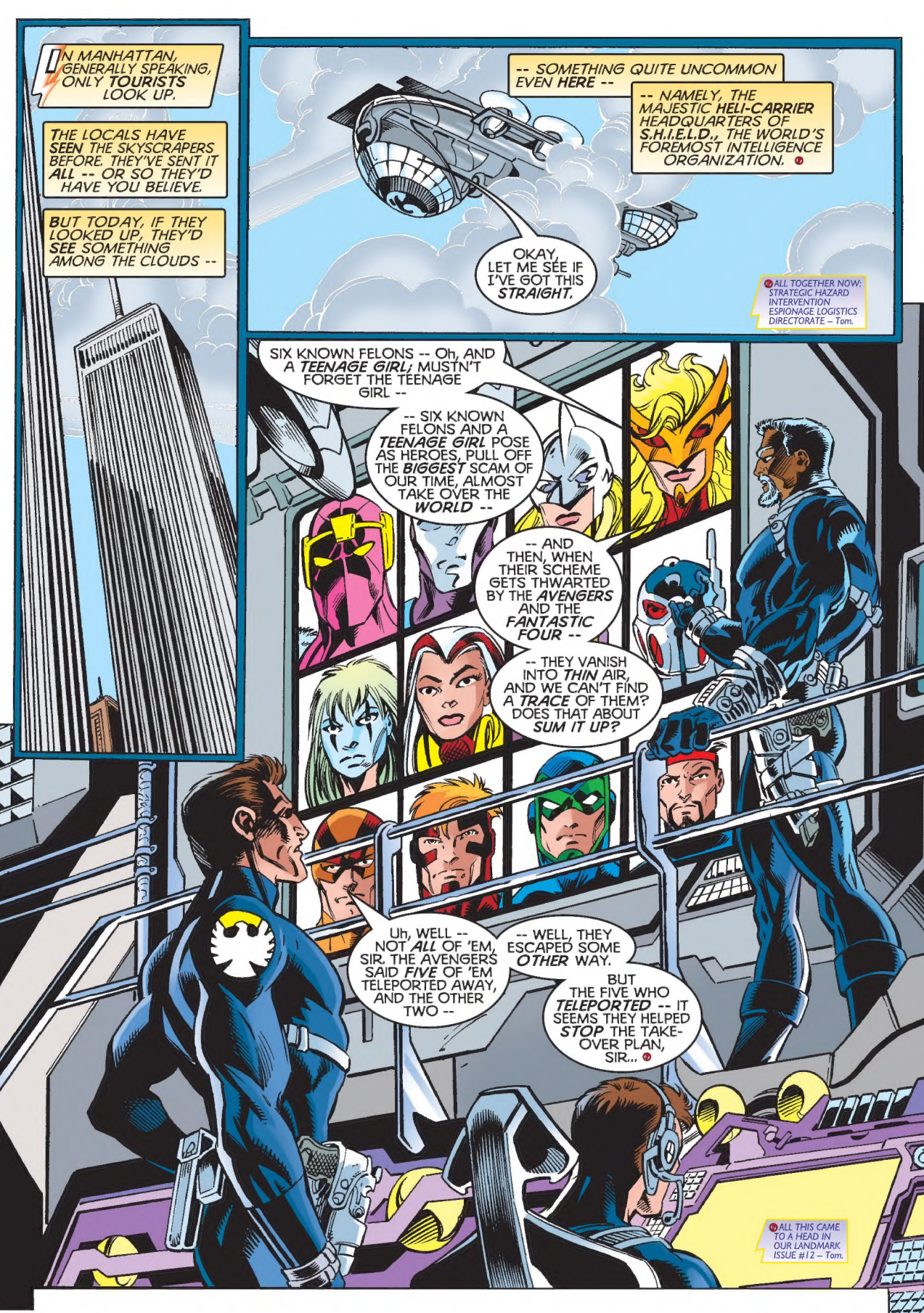
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS™
WELCOME BACK TO EARTH, T-BOLTS--
--YOU'RE BUSTED!
BUSIEK • BAGLEY • HANNA


ON MANHATTAN, GENERALLY SPEAKING, ONLY TOURISTS LOOK UP.
THE LOCALS HAVE SEEN THE SKYSCRAPERS BEFORE. THEY'VE SENT IT ALL -- OR SO THEY'D HAVE YOU BELIEVE.
BUT TODAY, IF THEY LOOKED UP, THEY'D SEE SOMETHING AMONG THE CLOUDS --
-- SOMETHING QUITE UNCOMMON EVEN HERE --
-- NAMELY, THE MAJESTIC HELI-CARRIER HEADQUARTERS OF S.H.I.E.L.D., THE WORLD'S FOREMOST INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION.
OKAY, LET ME SEE IF I'VE GOT THIS STRAIGHT.
ALL TOGETHER NOW: STRATEGIC HAZARD INTERVENTION ESPIONAGE LOGISTICS DIRECTORATE – Tom.
SIX KNOWN FELONS -- Oh, AND A TEENAGE GIRL; MUSTN'T FORGET THE TEENAGE GIRL --
-- SIX KNOWN FELONS AND A TEENAGE GIRL POSE AS HEROES, PULL OFF THE BIGGEST SCAM OF OUR TIME, ALMOST TAKE OVER THE WORLD --
-- AND THEN, WHEN THEIR SCHEME GETS THWARTED BY THE AVENGERS AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR --
-- THEY VANISH INTO THIN AIR, AND WE CAN'T FIND A TRACE OF THEM? DOES THAT ABOUT SUM IT UP?
Uh, WELL -- NOT ALL OF 'EM, SIR. THE AVENGERS SAID FIVE OF 'EM TELEPORTED AWAY, AND THE OTHER TWO --
-- WELL, THEY ESCAPED SOME OTHER WAY.
BUT THE FIVE WHO TELEPORTED -- IT SEEMS THEY HELPED STOP THE TAKE-OVER PLAN, SIR...
ALL THIS CAME TO A HEAD IN OUR LANDMARK ISSUE #12 – Tom.

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YES, SAYER. I'VE READ THE REPORT. I WAS BEING IRONIC.
BUT I'D STILL LIKE TO TALK TO THEM -- AND SO WOULD THE AUTHORITIES OF VIRTUALLY EVERY U.N. MEMBER NATION.
SO, FIND THEM, WOULD YOU? CHECK DOVECOTE. CHECK LATVERIA. GIVE THE MOLE MAN A CALL AND SEE IF THEY'RE WITH HIM.
JUST FIND THEM, SAYER. BEFORE I GET TESTY.
DO YOU READ ME?!
AND ONCE AGENT SAYER HAS BACKED OUT, DOING HIS BEST NOT TO STAMMER AS HE APOLOGIZES.
STILL NO LUCK, COMMANDER BRIDGE?
WHAT'S THE MATTER, KID? DON'T YOU TRUST ME TO TELL YOU IF WE FIND SOMETHING?
I'M JUST CONCERNED, SIR. MY PARTNERS AND I -- WE HAVE A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE THUNDERBOLTS.
GET IN LINE, KID.
HEY! WE'RE COOPERATING WITH YOU, COL. BRIDGE. BUT WE WERE PROMISED --
YES, I KNOW WHAT YOU WERE PROMISED.
RELAX, KID. WASHINGTON MAY HAVE FORCED YOU ON US AFTER WE TRIED TO CAPTURE THE THUNDERBOLTS AND FELL ON OUR FACES --
-- BUT I FOLLOW ORDERS. TRUST ME, YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE AT THEM --
IN #10. – Tom.

MARVEL'S Stan Lee presents: THE MIGHTIEST MISCREANTS
WANTED
DEAD OR ALIVE!
"-- YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE."
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE COLORADO ROCKIES...
GIMME A BREAK, MOONSTONE. I'M A CITY BOY, REMEMBER? WHERE I GREW UP --
Oh, COME NOW, ABE. SURELY YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN THAT!
KRAKK
BRZAKK
BY HURT BUSIEK AND MARK BAGLEY
SCOTT HANNA INKER
RS & COMICRAFT LETTERS
JOE ROSAS COLORS
TOM BREVOORT EDITOR
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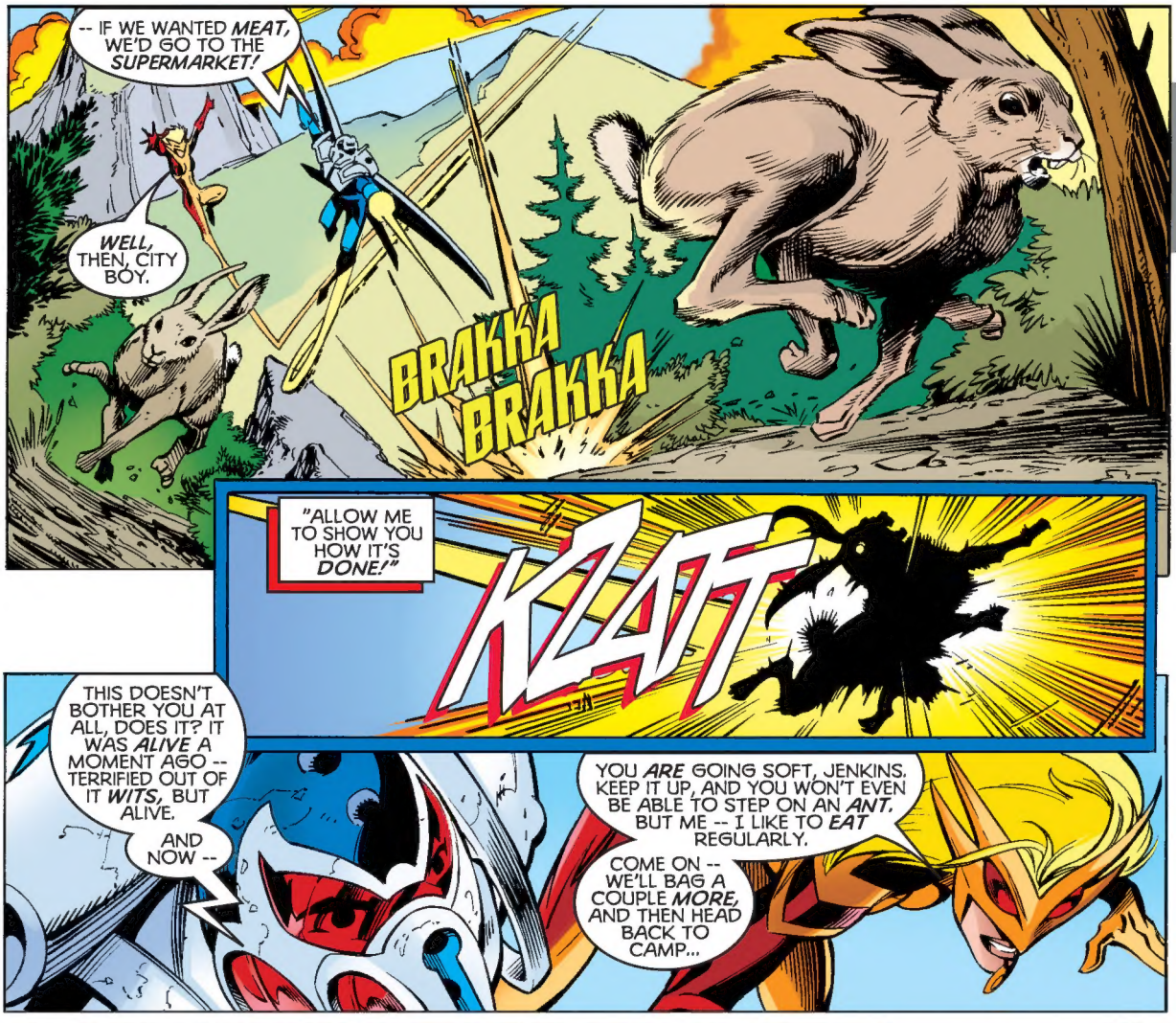
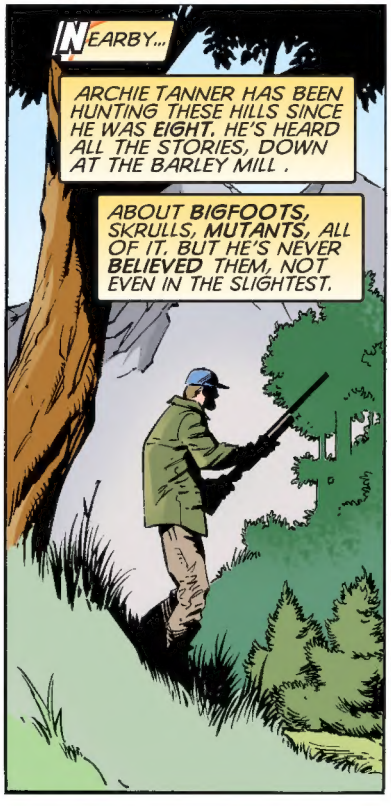
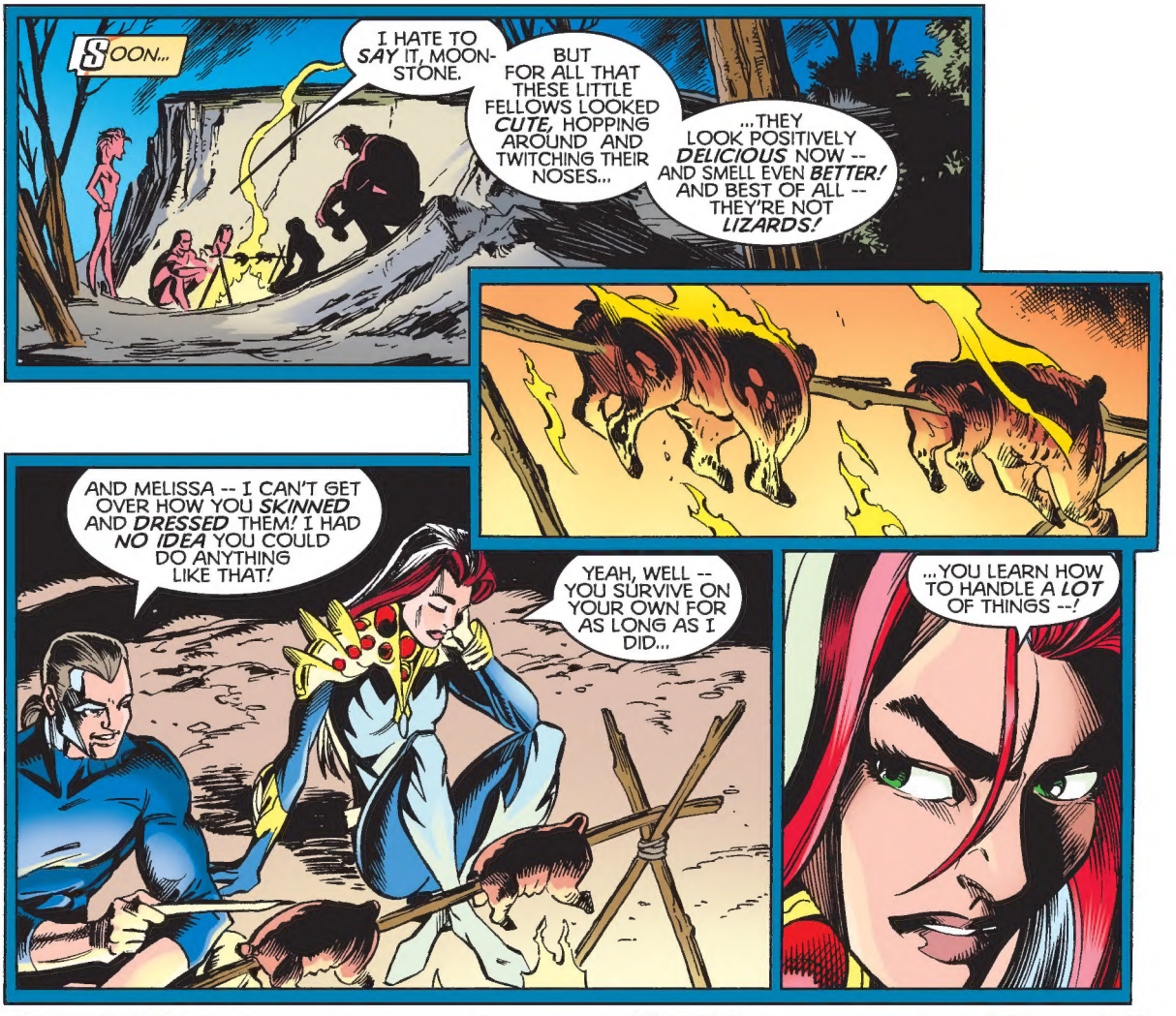
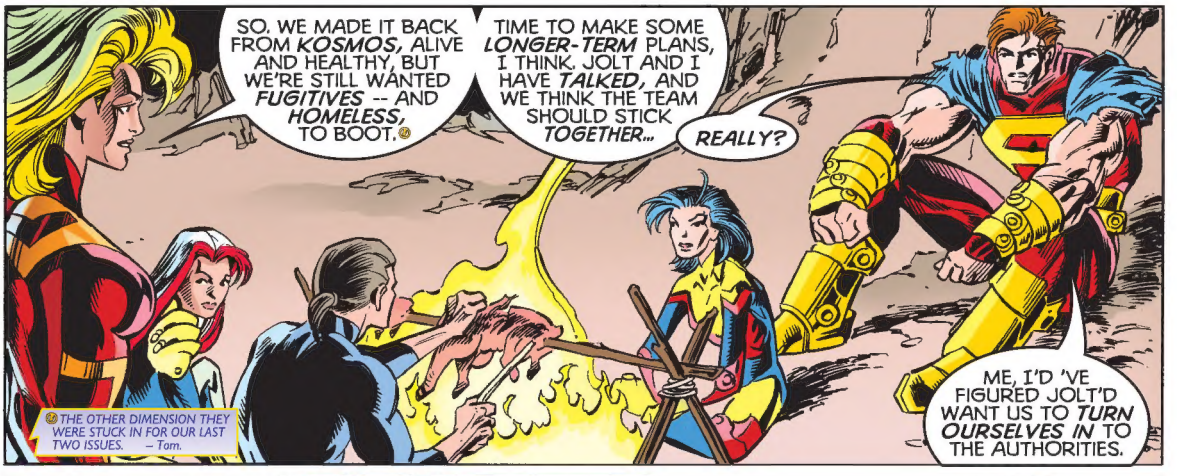

-- IF WE WANTED MEAT, WE'D GO TO THE SUPERMARKET!
WELL, THEN, CITY BOY.
BRAKKA BRAKKA
"ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU HOW IT'S DONE!"
KZAT
THIS DOESN'T BOTHER YOU AT ALL, DOES IT? IT WAS ALIVE A MOMENT AGO -- TERRIFIED OUT OF IT WITS, BUT ALIVE.
AND NOW --
YOU ARE GOING SOFT, JENKINS. KEEP IT UP, AND YOU WON'T EVEN BE ABLE TO STEP ON AN ANT, BUT ME -- I LIKE TO EAT REGULARLY.
COME ON -- WE'LL BAG A COUPLE MORE, AND THEN HEAD BACK TO CAMP...


NEARBY...
ARCHIE TANNER HAS BEEN HUNTING THESE HILLS SINCE HE WAS EIGHT. HE'S HEARD ALL THE STORIES, DOWN AT THE BARLEY MILL .
ABOUT BIGFOOTS, SKRULLS, MUTANTS, ALL OF IT, BUT HE'S NEVER BELIEVED THEM, NOT EVEN IN THE SLIGHTEST.

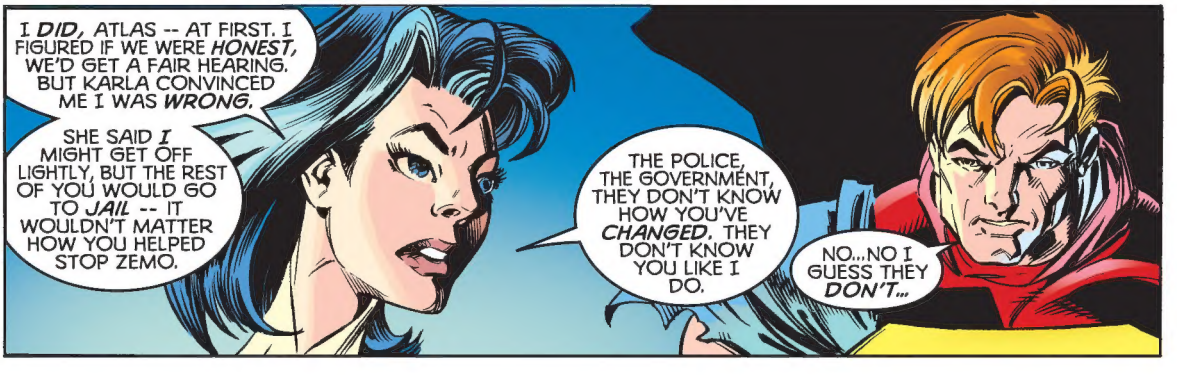
UNTIL TODAY.
WHAT IN --?

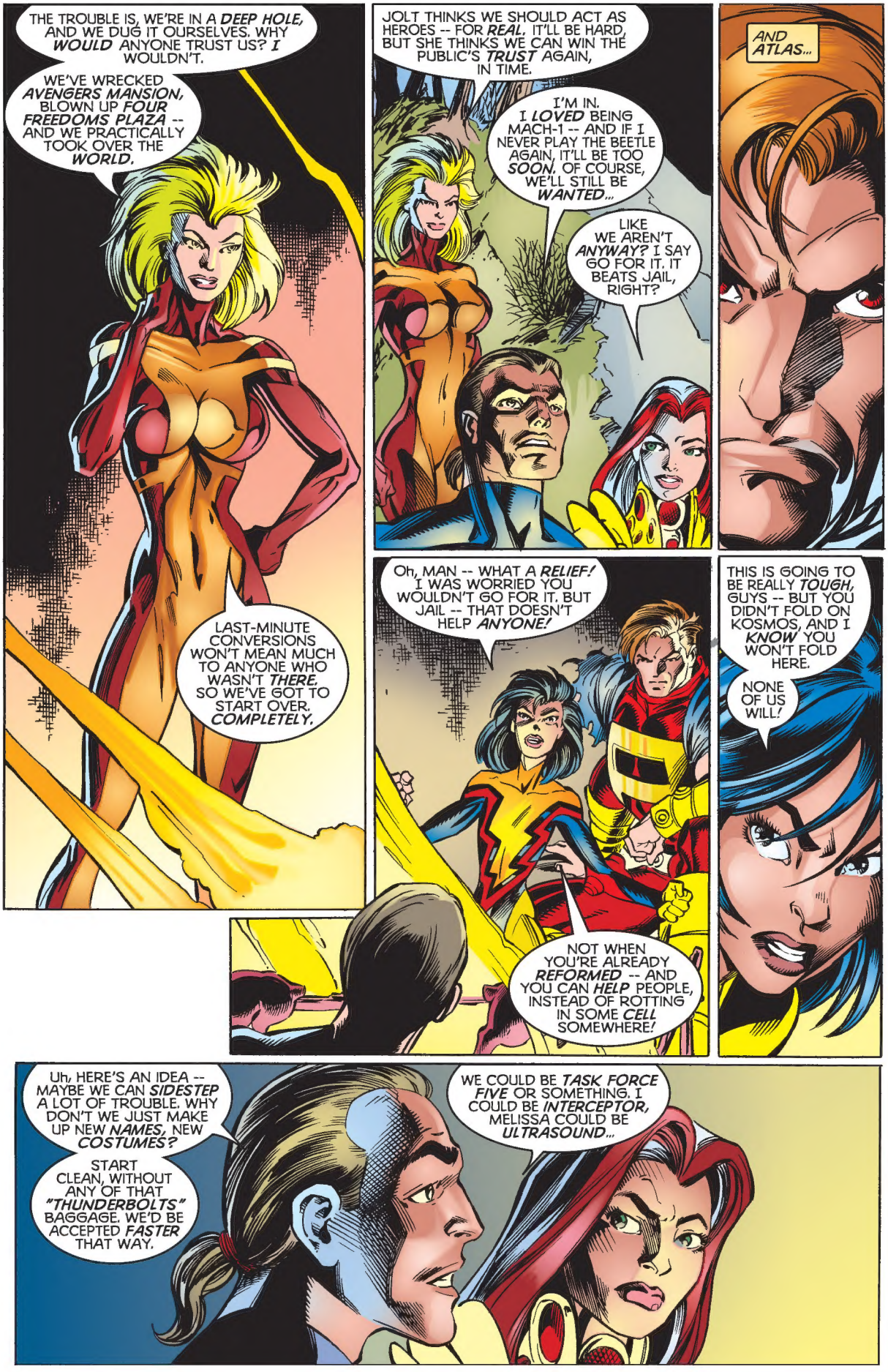
BY THE TIME ARCHIE GETS THERE, THERE'S NOTHING TO SEE, ASIDE FROM SOME ODD BURN MARKS ON THE GROUND. BUT STILL --
-- AT LEAST HE'LL HAVE A STORY TO TELL, DOWN AT THE BARLEY MILL TONIGHT --!
MAN

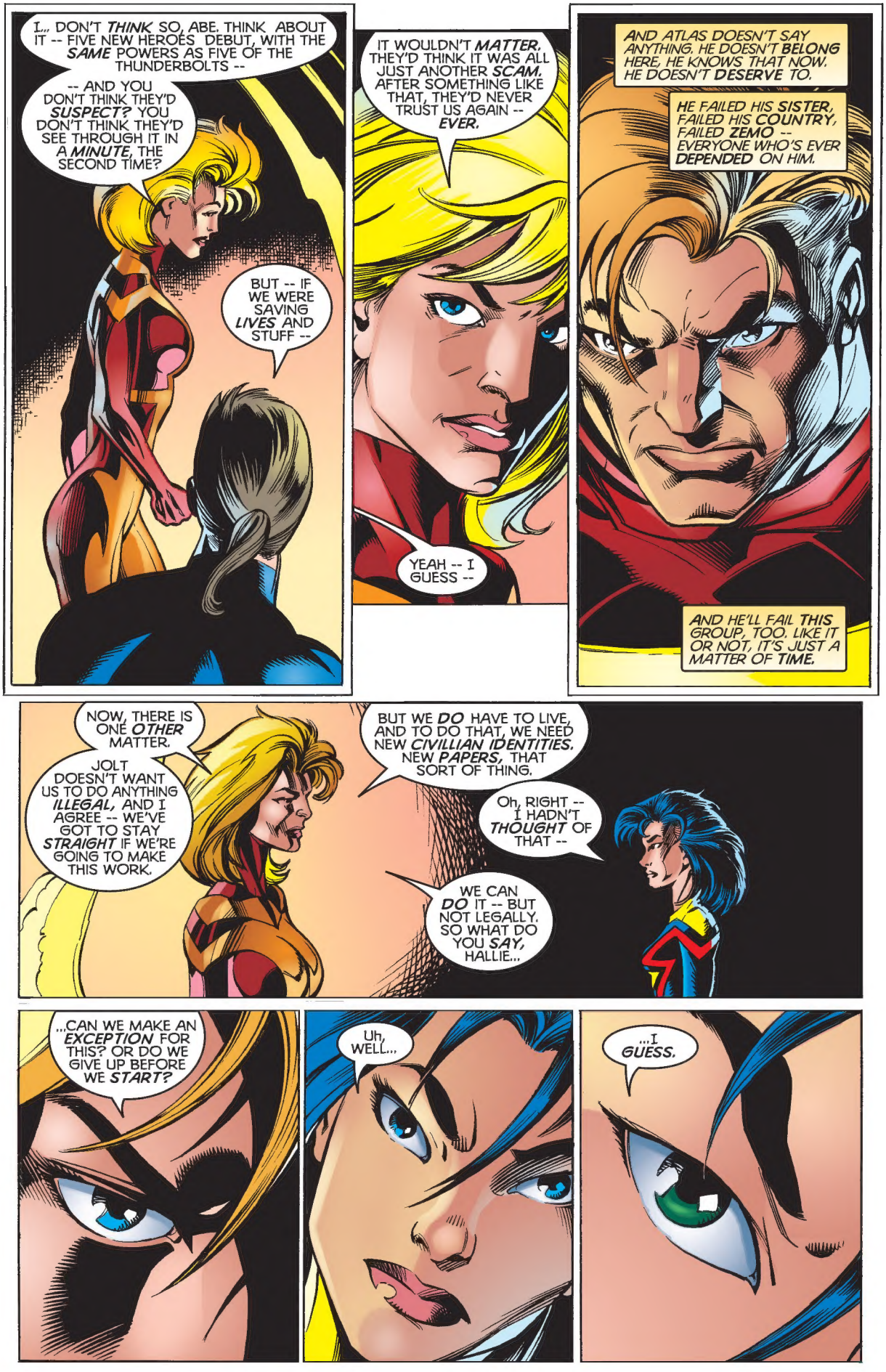

SOON...
I HATE TO SAY IT, MOON-STONE.
BUT FOR ALL THAT THESE LITTLE FELLOWS LOOKED CUTE, HOPPING AROUND AND TWITCHING THEIR NOSES...
...THEY LOOK POSITIVELY DELICIOUS NOW -- AND SMELL EVEN BETTER! AND BEST OF ALL -- THEY'RE NOT LIZARDS!
AND MELISSA -- I CAN'T GET OVER HOW YOU SKINNED AND DRESSED THEM! I HAD NO IDEA YOU COULD DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT!
YEAH, WELL -- YOU SURVIVE ON YOUR OWN FOR AS LONG AS I DID...
...YOU LEARN HOW TO HANDLE A LOT OF THINGS --!

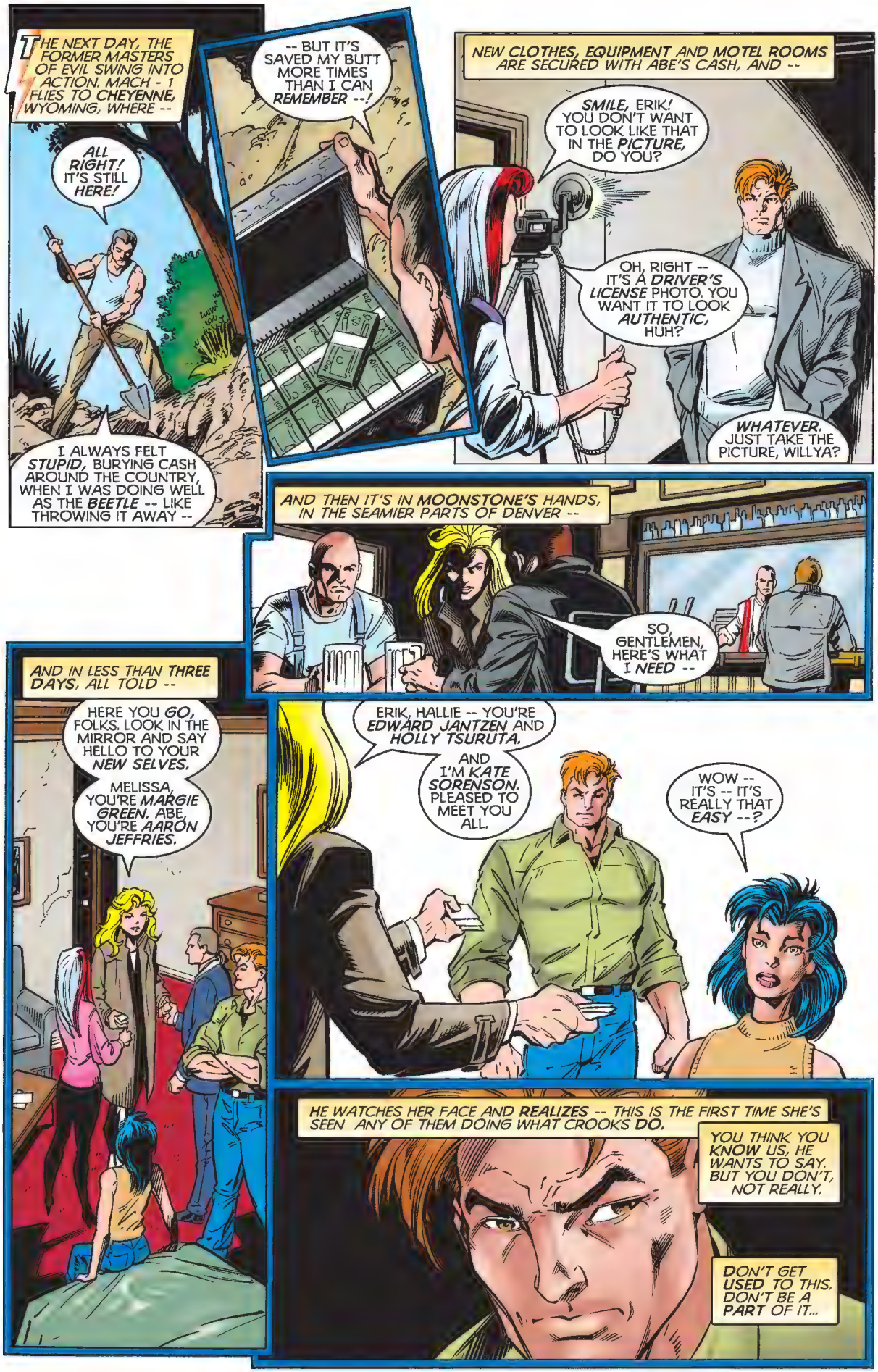

SO. WE MADE IT BACK FROM KOSMOS, ALIVE AND HEALTHY, BUT WE'RE STILL WANTED FUGITIVES -- AND HOMELESS, TO BOOT.
TIME TO MAKE SOME LONGER-TERM PLANS, I THINK. JOLT AND I HAVE TALKED, AND WE THINK THE TEAM SHOULD STICK TOGETHER...
REALLY?
ME, I'D 'VE FIGURED JOLT'D WANT US TO TURN OURSELVES IN TO THE AUTHORITIES.

@ THE OTHER DIMENSION THEY WERE STUCK IN FOR OUR LAST TWO ISSUES. – Tom.


I DID, ATLAS -- AT FIRST. I FIGURED IF WE WERE HONEST, WE'D GET A FAIR HEARING. BUT KARLA CONVINCED ME I WAS WRONG.
SHE SAID I MIGHT GET OFF LIGHTLY, BUT THE REST OF YOU WOULD GO TO JAIL -- IT WOULDN'T MATTER HOW YOU HELPED STOP ZEMO.
THE POLICE, THE GOVERNMENT, THEY DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'VE CHANGED. THEY DON'T KNOW YOU LIKE I DO.
NO...NO I GUESS THEY DON'T...

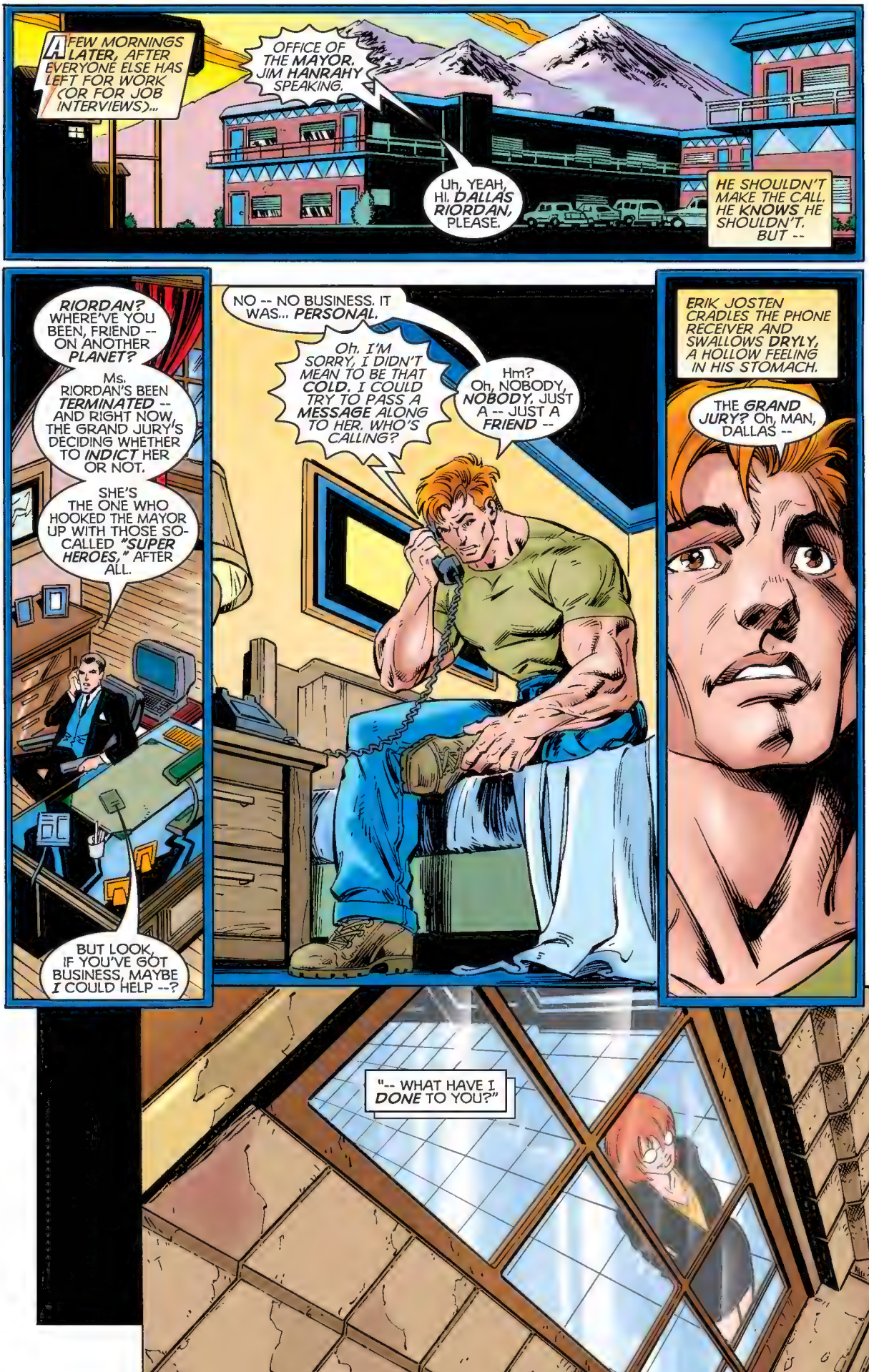

THE TROUBLE IS, WE'RE IN A DEEP HOLE, AND WE DUG IT OURSELVES. WHY WOULD ANYONE TRUST US? I WOULDN'T.
WE'VE WRECKED AVENGERS MANSION, BLOWN UP FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA -- AND WE PRACTICALLY TOOK OVER THE WORLD.
LAST-MINUTE CONVERSIONS WON'T MEAN MUCH TO ANYONE WHO WASN'T THERE. SO WE'VE GOT TO START OVER. COMPLETELY.
JOLT THINKS WE SHOULD ACT AS HEROES -- FOR REAL. IT'LL BE HARD, BUT SHE THINKS WE CAN WIN THE PUBLIC'S TRUST AGAIN, IN TIME.
I'M IN. I LOVED BEING MACH-1 -- AND IF I NEVER PLAY THE BEETLE AGAIN, IT'LL BE TOO SOON. OF COURSE, WE'LL STILL BE WANTED...
LIKE WE AREN'T ANYWAY? I SAY GO FOR IT. IT BEATS JAIL, RIGHT?
AND ATLAS...
Oh, MAN -- WHAT A RELIEF! I WAS WORRIED YOU WOULDN'T GO FOR IT. BUT JAIL -- THAT DOESN'T HELP ANYONE!
NOT WHEN YOU'RE ALREADY REFORMED -- AND YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE, INSTEAD OF ROTTING IN SOME CELL SOMEWHERE!
THIS IS GOING TO BE REALLY TOUGH, GUYS -- BUT YOU DIDN'T FOLD ON KOSMOS, AND I KNOW YOU WON'T FOLD HERE.
NONE OF US WILL!
Uh, HERE'S AN IDEA -- MAYBE WE CAN SIDESTEP A LOT OF TROUBLE. WHY DON'T WE JUST MAKE UP NEW NAMES, NEW COSTUMES?
START CLEAN, WITHOUT ANY OF THAT "THUNDERBOLTS" BAGGAGE. WE'D BE ACCEPTED FASTER THAT WAY.
WE COULD BE TASK FORCE FIVE OR SOMETHING. I COULD BE INTERCEPTOR, MELISSA COULD BE ULTRASOUND...

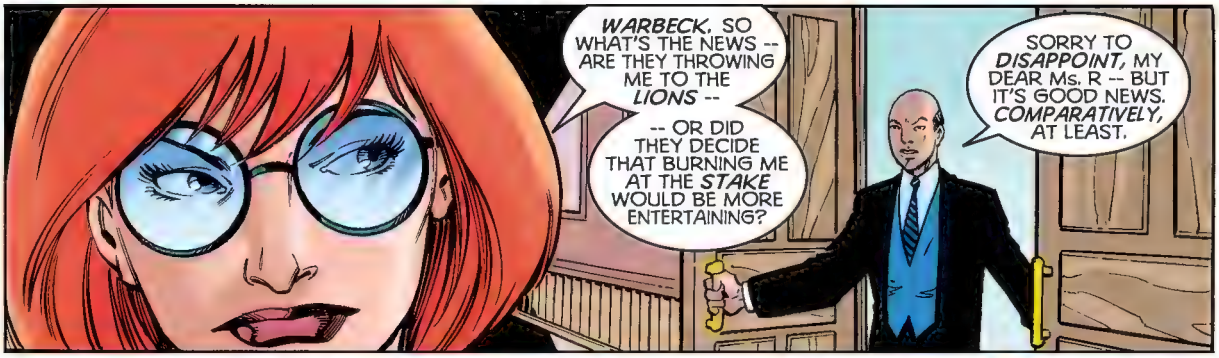

I... DON'T THINK SO, ABE. THINK ABOUT IT -- FIVE NEW HEROES DEBUT, WITH THE SAME POWERS AS FIVE OF THE THUNDERBOLTS --
-- AND YOU DON'T THINK THEY'D SUSPECT? YOU DON'T THINK THEY'D SEE THROUGH IT IN A MINUTE, THE SECOND TIME?
BUT -- IF WE WERE SAVING LIVES AND STUFF --
IT WOULDN'T MATTER. THEY'D THINK IT WAS ALL JUST ANOTHER SCAM. AFTER SOMETHING LIKE THAT, THEY'D NEVER TRUST US AGAIN -- EVER.
YEAH -- I GUESS --
AND ATLAS DOESN'T SAY ANYTHING. HE DOESN'T BELONG HERE. HE KNOWS THAT NOW. HE DOESN'T DESERVE TO.
HE FAILED HIS SISTER, FAILED HIS COUNTRY, FAILED ZEMO -- EVERYONE WHO'S EVER DEPENDED ON HIM.
AND HE'LL FAIL THIS GROUP, TOO. LIKE IT OR NOT, IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME.
NOW, THERE IS ONE OTHER MATTER.
JOLT DOESN'T WANT US TO DO ANYTHING ILLEGAL, AND I AGREE -- WE'VE GOT TO STAY STRAIGHT IF WE'RE GOING TO MAKE THIS WORK.
BUT WE DO HAVE TO LIVE, AND TO DO THAT, WE NEED NEW CIVILLIAN IDENTITIES. NEW PAPERS, THAT SORT OF THING.
Oh, RIGHT -- I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT --
WE CAN DO IT -- BUT NOT LEGALLY. SO WHAT DO YOU SAY, HALLIE...
...CAN WE MAKE AN EXCEPTION FOR THIS? OR DO WE GIVE UP BEFORE WE START?
Uh, WELL...
...I GUESS.


THE NEXT DAY, THE FORMER MASTERS OF EVIL SWING INTO ACTION. MACH - 1 FLIES TO CHEYENNE, WYOMING, WHERE --
ALL RIGHT! IT'S STILL HERE!
I ALWAYS FELT STUPID, BURYING CASH AROUND THE COUNTRY, WHEN I WAS DOING WELL AS THE BEETLE -- LIKE THROWING IT AWAY --
-- BUT IT'S SAVED MY BUTT MORE TIMES THAN I CAN REMEMBER --!
NEW CLOTHES, EQUIPMENT AND MOTEL ROOMS ARE SECURED WITH ABE'S CASH, AND --
SMILE, ERIK! YOU DON'T WANT TO LOOK LIKE THAT IN THE PICTURE, DO YOU?
OH, RIGHT -- IT'S A DRIVER'S LICENSE PHOTO. YOU WANT IT TO LOOK AUTHENTIC, HUH?
WHATEVER. JUST TAKE THE PICTURE, WILLYA?
AND THEN IT'S IN MOONSTONE'S HANDS, IN THE SEAMIER PARTS OF DENVER --
SO, GENTLEMEN, HERE'S WHAT I NEED --
AND IN LESS THAN THREE DAYS, ALL TOLD --
HERE YOU GO, FOLKS. LOOK IN THE MIRROR AND SAY HELLO TO YOUR NEW SELVES.
MELISSA, YOU'RE MARGIE GREEN. ABE, YOU'RE AARON JEFFRIES.
ERIK, HALLIE -- YOU'RE EDWARD JANTZEN AND HOLLY TSURUTA.
AND I'M KATE SORENSON. PLEASED TO MEET YOU ALL.
WOW -- IT'S -- IT'S REALLY THAT EASY --?
HE WATCHES HER FACE AND REALIZES -- THIS IS THE FIRST TIME SHE'S SEEN ANY OF THEM DOING WHAT CROOKS DO.
YOU THINK YOU KNOW US, HE WANTS TO SAY. BUT YOU DON'T, NOT REALLY.
DON'T GET USED TO THIS. DON'T BE A PART OF IT...

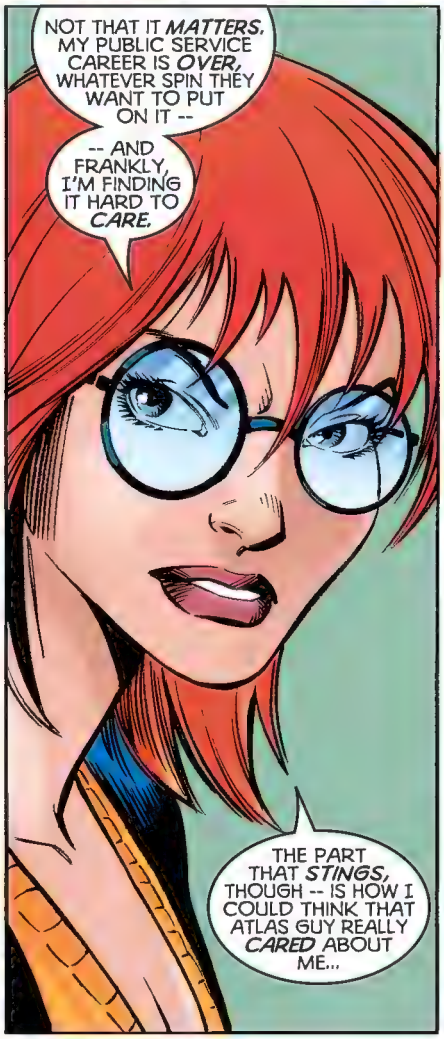
-- BUT BEFORE HE COULD HAVE SPOKEN --
IT'S NOTHING WE'RE PROUD OF, HALLIE. JUST A FEW TRICKS WE'VE LEARNED, TO HELP US GET BY. YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, RIGHT?
FROM HERE ON IN, WE'LL KEEP THINGS STRICTLY LEGAL -- OR AS LEGAL AS POSSIBLE, I SUPPOSE.
YEAH -- YEAH, I SUPPOSE.
BUT WE CAN'T KEEP LIVING ON ABE'S STASH. WE'LL NEED AN INCOME -- A LEGAL INCOME. AND THAT MEANS --
-- YOU FOR CHOOSING BURGER PLANET. ENJOY YOUR MEAL, AND HAVE A NICE --
7.95
-- HAND WITH THAT, ED? THOSE UNITS 'RE PRETTY HEAVY.
NAH. I THINK I CAN MAKE IT --
-- TO THE KOZY KOT, FOLKS. DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'D LIKE, OR DO YOU NEED A FEW MORE --
-- PLATES! WE NEED MORE PLATES UP HERE! IS THAT NEW GUY A DISHWASHER, OR A CIGAR-STORE INDIAN?!
YEAH, YEAH. C'MON BACK HERE, LOUD-MOUTH, AND I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I --
-- WILL BE MAKING OUR FINAL DECISION SOON, Ms. SORENSON, AND WE'LL BE IN TOUCH.
THANK YOU, MR. JEFFERS.
SHE DIDN'T GET IT -- SHE KNOWS THAT ALREADY. AND SHE'S THE ONLY ONE OF THEM WHO HASN'T FOUND A JOB.
BUT SHE CAN'T BRING HERSELF TO ACCEPT A MENIAL POSITION, LIKE THE OTHERS --

-- AND EVEN HERE, IT'S HARD TO HIDE HER CONTEMPT FOR THESE TINY MINDS AND THEIR TINY ASPIRATIONS.
BUT THIS IS WHAT JOLT WANTS. AND SHE'S THE KEY. SHE CAN KEEP THE TEAM TOGETHER, UNTIL --
-- SEE THE PINS ON THE BLONDE? SWEET AS CANDY, I TELL YOU -- BUT I HEARD HER TALKIN', AND SHE'S SO SNOOTY YOU'D --
Hm?
TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE NEW HIRES, DO YOU? THAT'S SO COMMENDABLE, IN AN UP-AND-COMING YOUNG EXEC.
BUT IF YOU'RE TRULY SO FASCINATED --
H-HUH?!
"-- WHY NOT GET IN A LITTLE CLOSER, WHERE YOU CAN HEAR BETTER?!"
KRAMM
RANDALL SIMMONS OPENS HIS MOUTH, THEN CLOSES IT AGAIN. HE'S NOT GOING TO SAY A WORD. HE WOULDN'T DARE.
BUT BOY, DOES HE HAVE A STORY TO TELL -- !
WELL. THAT'S NOT APPROPRIATE INTERVIEW BEHAVIOR, I EXPECT -- BUT I DIDN'T REALLY WANT THIS JOB, ANYWAY.
NO, NO, DON'T BOTHER -- I'LL SHOW MYSELF OUT. UNLESS... YOU HAD SOMETHING TO ADD TO YOUR FRIEND'S OBSERVATION?

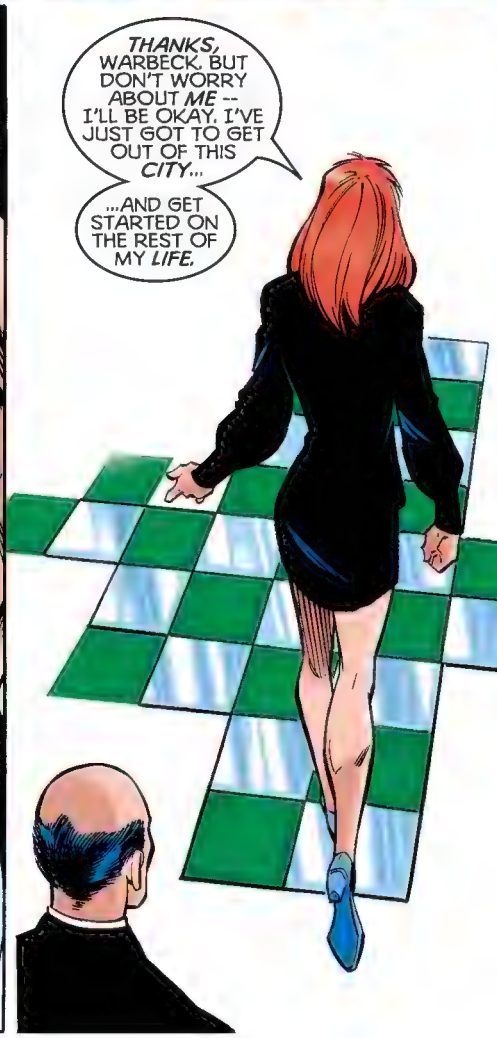

A FEW MORNINGS LATER, AFTER EVERYONE ELSE HAS LEFT FOR WORK (OR FOR JOB INTERVIEWS)...
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR. JIM HANRAHY SPEAKING.
Uh, YEAH, HI. DALLAS RIORDAN, PLEASE.
HE SHOULDN'T MAKE THE CALL. HE KNOWS HE SHOULDN'T. BUT --
RIORDAN? WHERE'VE YOU BEEN, FRIEND -- ON ANOTHER PLANET?
Ms. RIORDAN'S BEEN TERMINATED -- AND RIGHT NOW, THE GRAND JURY'S DECIDING WHETHER TO INDICT HER OR NOT.
SHE'S THE ONE WHO HOOKED THE MAYOR UP WITH THOSE SO-CALLED "SUPER HEROES," AFTER ALL.
BUT LOOK, IF YOU'VE GOT BUSINESS, MAYBE I COULD HELP --?
NO -- NO BUSINESS. IT WAS... PERSONAL.
Oh, I'M SORRY, I DIDN'T MEAN TO BE THAT COLD. I COULD TRY TO PASS A MESSAGE ALONG TO HER. WHO'S CALLING?
Hm? Oh, NOBODY, NOBODY. JUST A -- JUST A FRIEND --
ERIK JOSTEN CRADLES THE PHONE RECEIVER AND SWALLOWS DRYLY, A HOLLOW FEELING IN HIS STOMACH.
THE GRAND JURY? Oh, MAN, DALLAS --
"-- WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU?"


WARBECK. SO WHAT'S THE NEWS -- ARE THEY THROWING ME TO THE LIONS --
-- OR DID THEY DECIDE THAT BURNING ME AT THE STAKE WOULD BE MORE ENTERTAINING?
SORRY TO DISAPPOINT, MY DEAR Ms. R -- BUT IT'S GOOD NEWS. COMPARATIVELY, AT LEAST.

THEY'VE DECIDED NOT TO INDICT -- THERE'S NO EVIDENCE LINKING YOU TO THE THUNDERBOLTS BEFORE THEY APPEARED.
WELL, OF COURSE THERE ISN'T. I HADN'T EVEN HEARD OF THEM BEFORE THE MAYOR DECIDED TO MAKE THEM THE CITY MASCOTS!
IT WAS HIS IDEA ALL ALONG -- I'M JUST BEING HUNG OUT TO DRY SO HE CAN CLAIM HE WAS "SADLY, SADLY MISLED."

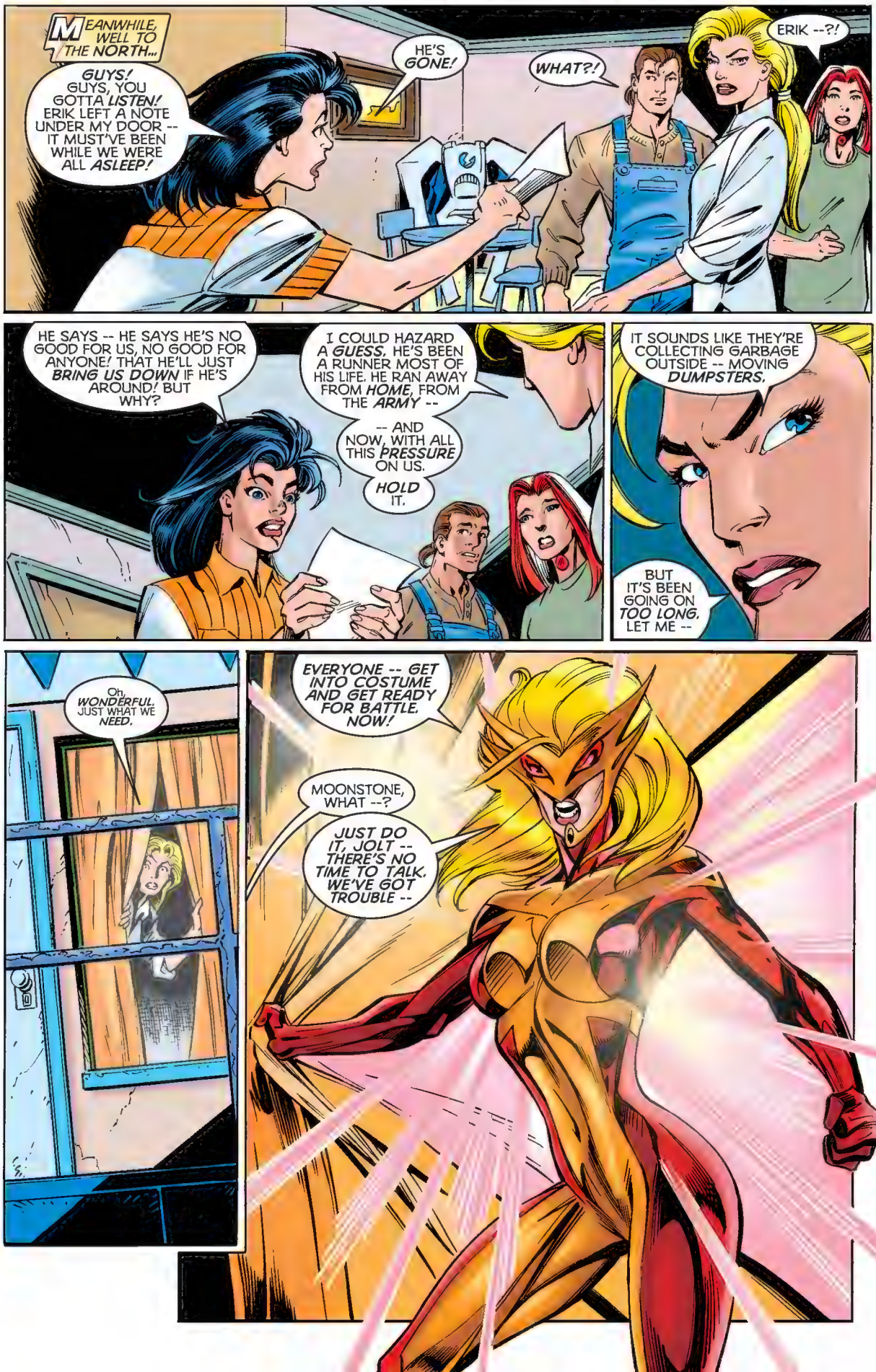

NOT THAT IT MATTERS. MY PUBLIC SERVICE CAREER IS OVER, WHATEVER SPIN THEY WANT TO PUT ON IT --
-- AND FRANKLY, I'M FINDING IT HARD TO CARE.
THE PART THAT STINGS, THOUGH -- IS HOW I COULD THINK THAT ATLAS GUY REALLY CARED ABOUT ME...

LOOK, DALLAS -- IF THERE'S ANY-THING I CAN DO --

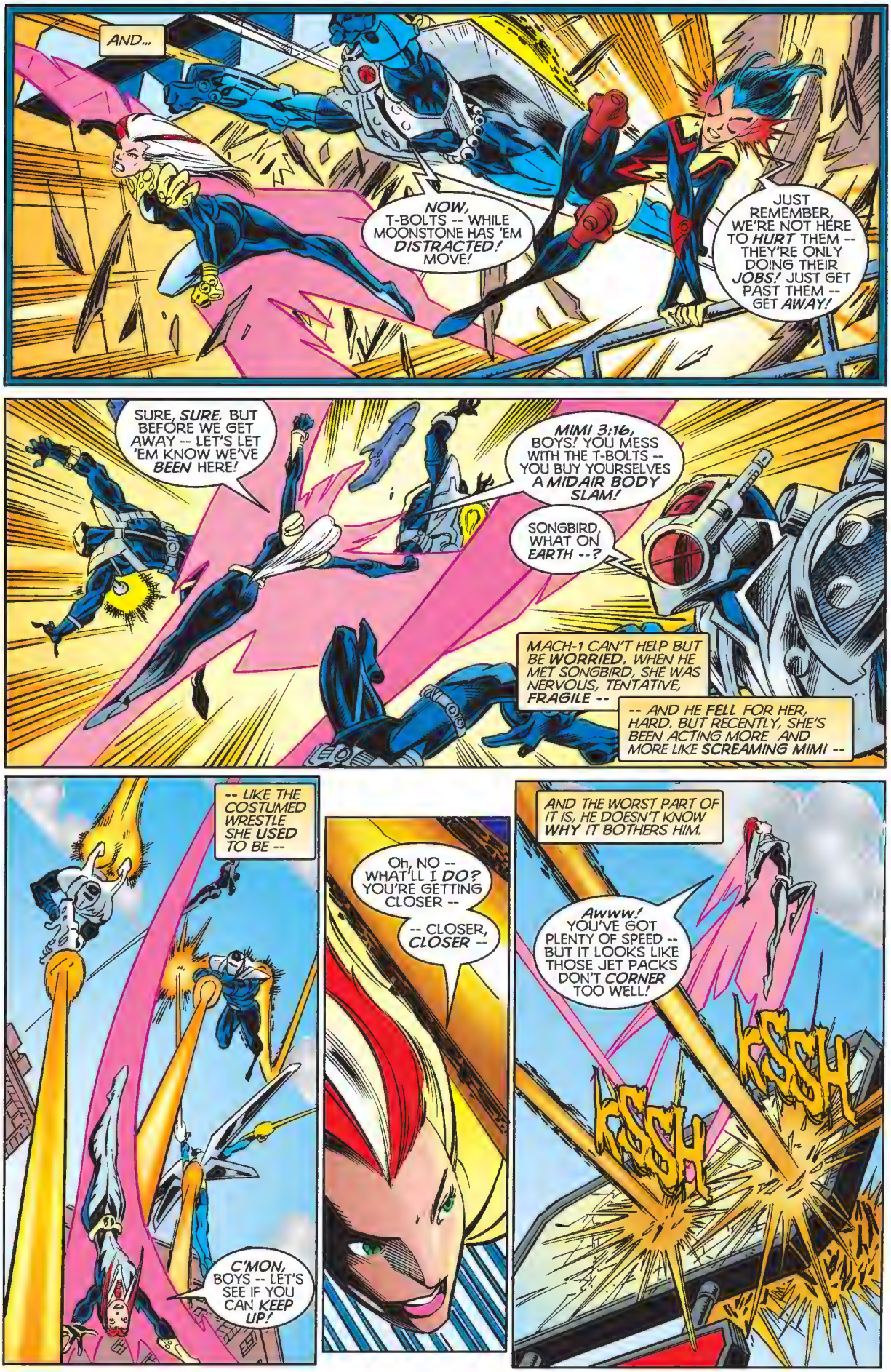

THANKS, WARBECK. BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME -- I'LL BE OKAY. I'VE JUST GOT TO GET OUT OF THIS CITY...
...AND GET STARTED ON THE REST OF MY LIFE.

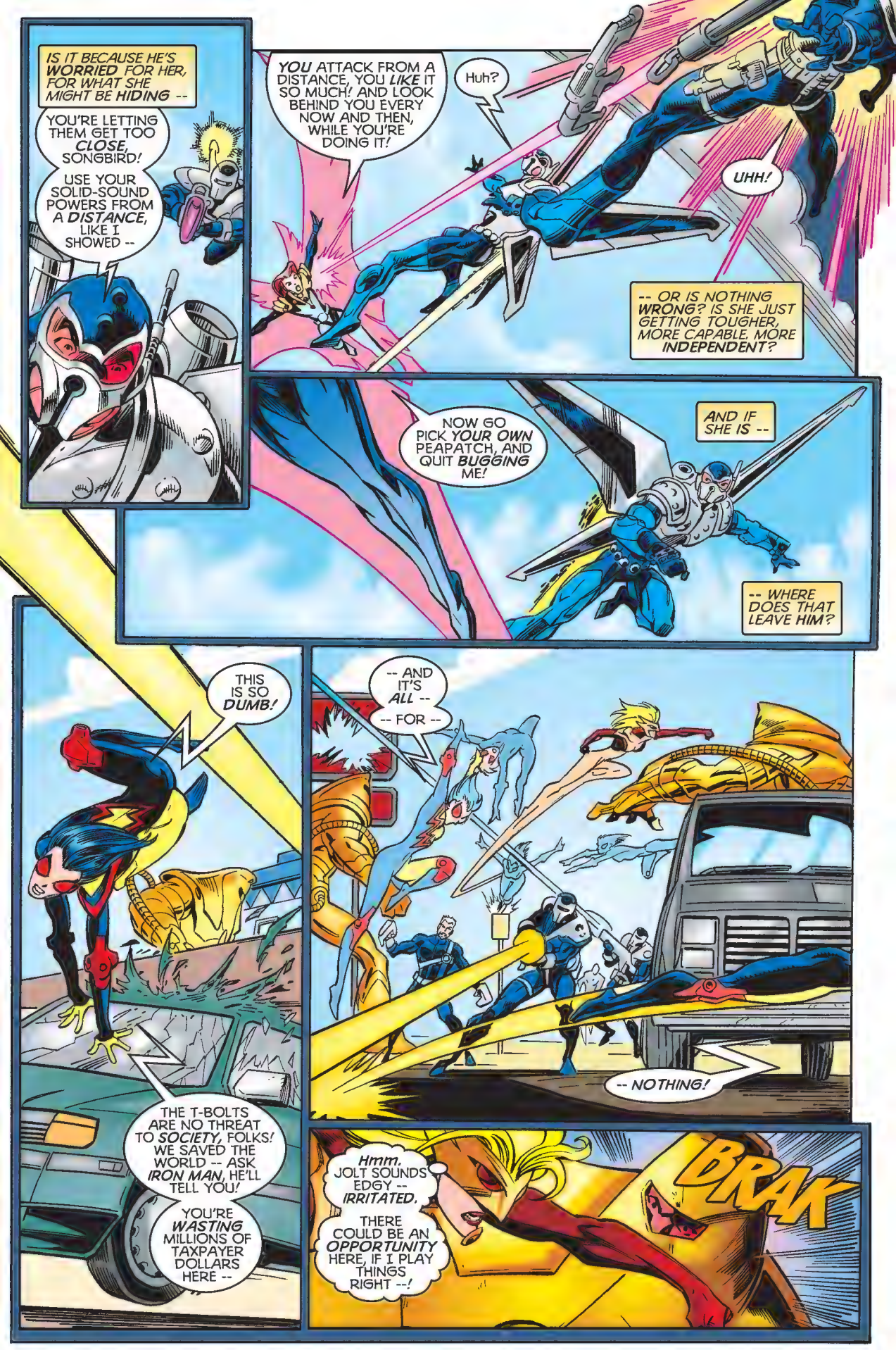
MEXICO.
AND A DISTINCTIVE, EUROPEAN-STYLED CASTLE, WHERE S.H.I.E.L.D. INSTALLED SECURITY DEVICES HUM AND CLICK --
-- AND REGULARLY TRANSMIT AN ALL-CLEAR SIGNAL --
TUM-TE-TUM-TUM...
UP THE TEMPERATURE A FEW DEGREES... TWEAK THE CALCIUM A GRAM OR TWO...
BOOST THOSE AMINO ACIDS, NICE AS YOU PLEASE...
AND PUT THEM ALL TOGETHER, AND THEY SPELL --
TECHNO.
GOOD MORNING, BARON. NICE TO SEE YOU UP AND AROUND.
LESS STIFF TODAY, I TRUST?
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, TECHNO.
Ah. WELL, YOU KNOW ME -- IF THERE'S A PROBLEM, I WANT TO FIX IT. MOONSTONE NOTED A PSYCHOLOGICAL FLAW IN MY HAVING A ROBOTIC BODY --
-- SO I THOUGHT I MIGHT CLONE MYSELF A NEW BIOLOGICAL ONE.
I SEE. AND WHY, MIGHT I ASK, IS IT A CLONE OF ME?
BOY, DID SHE EVER, AT THE CLIMAX TO #12 – Tom.
Oh, THAT.
I DIDN'T SEE ANY REASON TO SETTLE FOR PUDGY OLD P. NORBERT EBERSOL AGAIN. I WAS THINKING OF USING PAUL NEWMAN --
-- BUT, WELL, I HAD SOME CELL SAMPLES FROM YOU. IT'S A PERFECTLY GOOD FACE, AND WITH YOU NOT USING IT --

WH- WHAT --?
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, TECHNO. NONE. I AM ZEMO, AND MY BODY IS MY OWN. I TRUST WE ARE CLEAR ON THIS.
YOU KNOW, KEVIN COSTNER MIGHT BE AN EVEN BETTER CHOICE...
BESIDES, YOU SHOULD NOT BE WASTING TIME ON FRIVOLITIES WHEN THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE.
COME ALONG -- I'VE DISCOVERED SOMETHING ON THE DIMENSIONAL SCANNER THAT LOOKS QUITE PROMISING.
IT MAY BE JUST WHAT WE NEED FOR RETRIBUTION AGAINST THE THUNDERBOLTS --!


MEANWHILE, WELL TO THE NORTH...
GUYS! GUYS, YOU GOTTA LISTEN! ERIK LEFT A NOTE UNDER MY DOOR -- IT MUST'VE BEEN WHILE WE WERE ALL ASLEEP!
HE'S GONE!
WHAT?!
ERIK --?!
HE SAYS -- HE SAYS HE'S NO GOOD FOR US, NO GOOD FOR ANYONE! THAT HE'LL JUST BRING US DOWN IF HE'S AROUND! BUT WHY?
I COULD HAZARD A GUESS, HE'S BEEN A RUNNER MOST OF HIS LIFE. HE RAN AWAY FROM HOME, FROM THE ARMY --
-- AND NOW, WITH ALL THIS PRESSURE ON US.
HOLD IT.
IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE COLLECTING GARBAGE OUTSIDE -- MOVING DUMPSTERS.
BUT IT'S BEEN GOING ON TOO LONG, LET ME --
Oh, WONDERFUL. JUST WHAT WE NEED.
EVERYONE -- GET INTO COSTUME AND GET READY FOR BATTLE, NOW!
MOONSTONE, WHAT --?
JUST DO IT, JOLT -- THERE'S NO TIME TO TALK. WE'VE GOT TROUBLE --

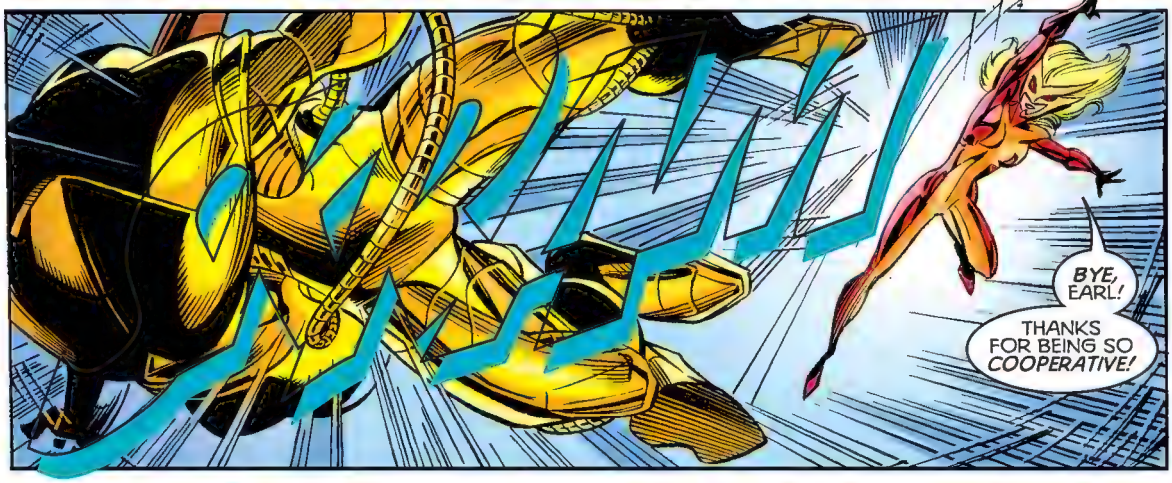
"-- S.H.I.E.L.D. TROUBLE!"
IT'S OVER, THUNDERBOLTS -- YOU'RE SURROUNDED!
YOU MAY THINK OF THIS AS A SECLUDED BACK-WATER, BUT PEOPLE TALK! AND WE LISTEN!
SO COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP -- AND COME OUT SLOWLY!
CABLE T.V.
FEED ST
AGENT COLLINS -- I WANT YOU AND YOUR MEN READY TO REACT AT THE SLIGHTEST MOVEMENT!
NOT TO WORRY, SIR.
FRONT, BACK, SIDE EXITS, ROOF -- WHEREVER THEY COME FROM, WE'RE READY FOR 'EM!
Oh, AGENT COLLINS? AND WHAT IF WE COME FROM BELOW?
Eh?
HELLO, COMMANDER BRIDGE. I SEE YOU'VE BROKEN OUT THE MANDROIDS FOR US.
THAT'S SO FLATTERING!
WHAM

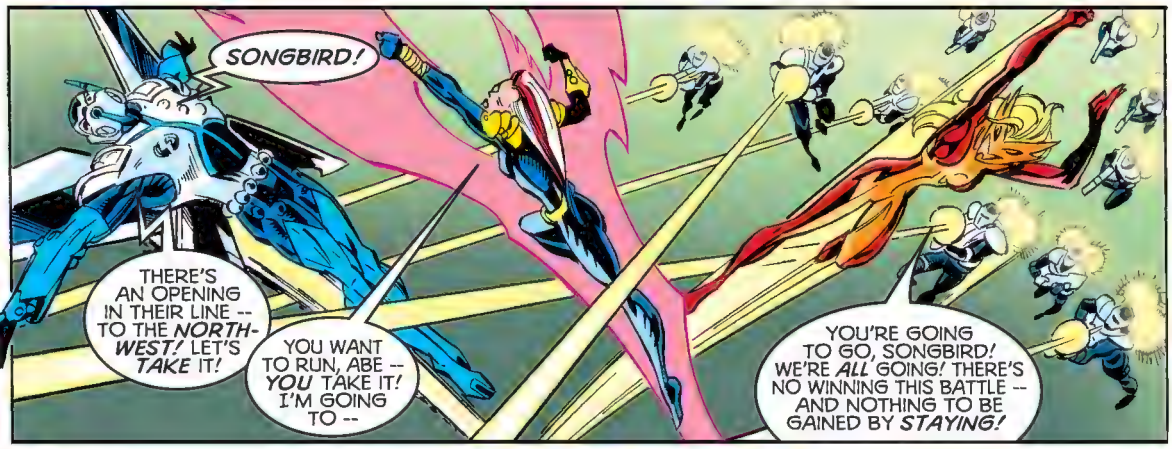

AND...
NOW, T-BOLTS -- WHILE MOONSTONE HAS 'EM DISTRACTED! MOVE!
JUST REMEMBER, WE'RE NOT HERE TO HURT THEM -- THEY'RE ONLY DOING THEIR JOBS! JUST GET PAST THEM -- GET AWAY!
SURE, SURE. BUT BEFORE WE GET AWAY -- LET'S LET 'EM KNOW WE'VE BEEN HERE!
MIMI 3:16, BOYS! YOU MESS WITH THE T-BOLTS -- YOU BUY YOURSELVES A MIDAIR BODY SLAM!
SONGBIRD, WHAT ON EARTH --?
MACH-1 CAN'T HELP BUT BE WORRIED. WHEN HE MET SONGBIRD, SHE WAS NERVOUS, TENTATIVE, FRAGILE --
-- AND HE FELL FOR HER, HARD. BUT RECENTLY, SHE'S BEEN ACTING MORE AND MORE LIKE SCREAMING MIMI --
-- LIKE THE COSTUMED WRESTLE SHE USED TO BE --
C'MON, BOYS -- LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN KEEP UP!
Oh, NO -- WHAT'LL I DO? YOU'RE GETTING CLOSER --
-- CLOSER, CLOSER --
AND THE WORST PART OF IT IS, HE DOESN'T KNOW WHY IT BOTHERS HIM.
Awww! YOU'VE GOT PLENTY OF SPEED -- BUT IT LOOKS LIKE THOSE JET PACKS DON'T CORNER TOO WELL!
FSSH
FSSH


IS IT BECAUSE HE'S WORRIED FOR HER, FOR WHAT SHE MIGHT BE HIDING --
YOU'RE LETTING THEM GET TOO CLOSE, SONGBIRD!
USE YOUR SOLID-SOUND POWERS FROM A DISTANCE, LIKE I SHOWED --
YOU ATTACK FROM A DISTANCE, YOU LIKE IT SO MUCH! AND LOOK BEHIND YOU EVERY NOW AND THEN, WHILE YOU'RE DOING IT!
Huh?
UHH!
-- OR IS NOTHING WRONG? IS SHE JUST GETTING TOUGHER, MORE CAPABLE, MORE INDEPENDENT?
NOW GO PICK YOUR OWN PEAPATCH, AND QUIT BUGGING ME!
AND IF SHE IS --
-- WHERE DOES THAT LEAVE HIM?
THIS IS SO DUMB!
-- AND IT'S ALL --
-- FOR --
-- NOTHING!
THE T-BOLTS ARE NO THREAT TO SOCIETY, FOLKS! WE SAVED THE WORLD -- ASK IRON MAN, HE'LL TELL YOU!
YOU'RE WASTING MILLIONS OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS HERE --
Hmm. JOLT SOUNDS EDGY -- IRRITATED.
THERE COULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY HERE, IF I PLAY THINGS RIGHT --!
BRAK

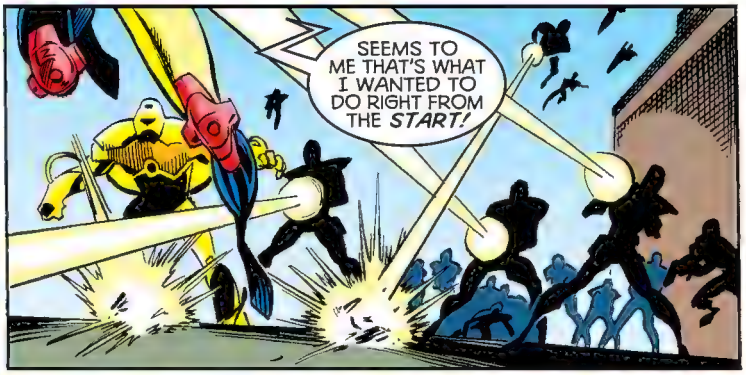
KRAMMMMMM!
NH!
HAH! YOU LEFT YOUR GUARD OPEN, WITCH --
-- AND THAT'S GONNA COST YOU!
WCCCCH
HOLY --!
BACK OFF, MEN. WE'VE GOT HER.
JUST WATCH IT, EARL -- SHE'S PLENTY TRICKY.
THAT... THAT HURT ME, YOU TIN-PLATED TERRORS!
ACTUALLY, I BARELY FELT IT. BUT I CAN'T LET ON THAT I COULD TAKE THESE TWO WITHOUT MUSSING MY EYELINER --
-- I'VE GOT TO MAKE THIS LOOK GOOD.
YOU'RE NOT HITTING ME AGAIN!
KLOOM
JOLT! WE NEED YOUR HELP HERE!
WE'RE OUTNUMBERED, AND WITH ATLAS GONE, WE'RE UNDER-STRENGTH! YOU CAN'T JUST DUCK AND DODGE --
-- IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE PART OF THIS TEAM, YOU HAVE TO BE PART OF IT, NOT JUST A CHEERLEADER!
CHEERLEADER?
CHEERLEADER?!

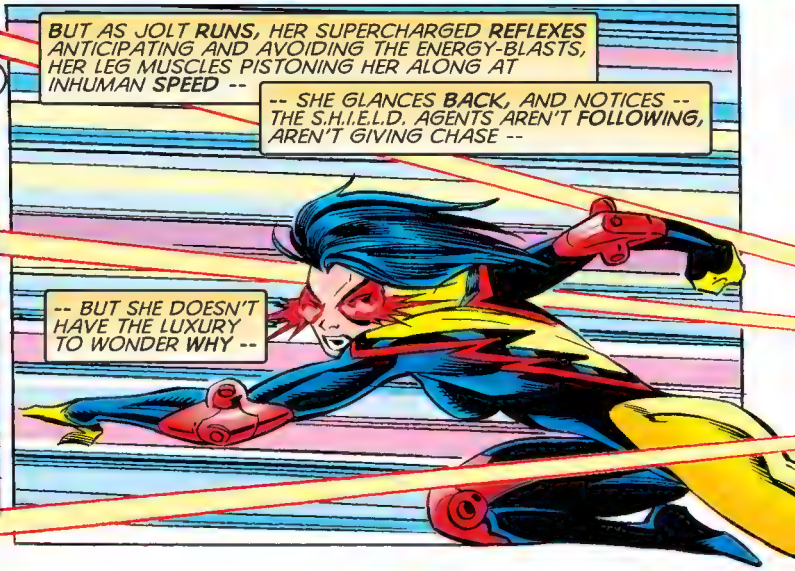
I DON'T SEE ANYTHING TO CHEER HERE, MOONSTONE!
AFTER ALL, THIS IS WHAT LIFE'S GOING TO BE LIKE FROM NOW ON, RIGHT?
ZAK
ZAK
THESE ARE GOOD MEN -- DEDICATED MEN -- AND WE SHOULDN'T BE FIGHTING THEM! WE SHOULD BE ON THE SAME SIDE!
ALL WE NEED IS A CHANCE! A LITTLE TIME TO PROVE OURSELVES! BUT WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET IT!
THEY WON'T LISTEN! THEY WON'T SEE!
KRAC
AND WE KNEW IT'D BE THIS WAY! WE WERE EXPECTING IT! JUST... JUST NOT THIS SOON!
KZAK
SO FINE! THEY WANT TO FIGHT? YOU WANT ME TO FIGHT? GREAT! IT'S STUPID, IT'S POINTLESS -- BUT HERE I AM!
HAPPY NOW?!
Ahh, MY LITTLE IDEALIST -- THAT'S THE WAY. GET MAD, FRUSTRATED -- AND BLAME EVERYONE AROUND YOU!
LET THE RESENTMENT GROW -- AND YOU'LL COME ALONG JUST FINE --!
YO, MOONSTONE! I HATE TO INTERRUPT ALL THIS FUN -- BUT SOMEONE SHOULD POINT OUT THAT THEY'RE BRINGING UP REINFORCEMENTS!
CAN WE MAYBE GET OUTTA HERE?
LEAD THE WAY, MACH-1!
I'LL BE RIGHT BEHIND YOU -- JUST AS SOON AS I TAKE CARE OF SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS!
HI, EARL!
A-AH!
RAKK


BYE, EARL!
THANKS FOR BEING SO COOPERATIVE!


SONGBIRD!
THERE'S AN OPENING IN THEIR LINE -- TO THE NORTH-WEST! LET'S TAKE IT!
YOU WANT TO RUN, ABE -- YOU TAKE IT! I'M GOING TO --
YOU'RE GOING TO GO, SONGBIRD! WE'RE ALL GOING! THERE'S NO WINNING THIS BATTLE -- AND NOTHING TO BE GAINED BY STAYING!

JOLT! FOLLOW MACH-1 -- I'LL GUARD OUR REAR!
WE'RE LEAVING!
Oh? GOOD!


SEEMS TO ME THAT'S WHAT I WANTED TO DO RIGHT FROM THE START!


BUT AS JOLT RUNS, HER SUPERCHARGED REFLEXES ANTICIPATING AND AVOIDING THE ENERGY-BLASTS, HER LEG MUSCLES PISTONING HER ALONG AT INHUMAN SPEED --
-- SHE GLANCES BACK, AND NOTICES -- THE S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS AREN'T FOLLOWING, AREN'T GIVING CHASE --
-- BUT SHE DOESN'T HAVE THE LUXURY TO WONDER WHY --

AND SOON...
WE LOST 'EM!
DID WE? I WOULDN'T THINK THEY'D GIVE UP THIS FAST --
EVEN FASTER. THE GROUND TROOPS DIDN'T PURSUE US, RIGHT FROM THE START. THEY LET US GO.
AND THE AIRBORNE AGENTS -- THEY FLANKED US FOR A WHILE, BUT THEY DIDN'T CLOSE IN.
IT'S ALMOST AS IF -- THEY WERE HERDING US, MAKING SURE WE RAN IN THIS DIRECTION.
BUT -- WHY WOULD THEY DO THAT?
MAYBE BECAUSE THEY MADE A DEAL, THUNDERBOLTS!
Huh?
WHO --?
MAYBE BECAUSE THIS WHOLE OPERATION WAS A FEINT -- DESIGNED TO LEAD YOU RIGHT INTO THE HANDS OF YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE...
...THE HANDS OF THE TEAM WHOSE NAME YOU SULLIED WITH YOUR HEINOUS ACTS -- THE LIGHTNING RODS!
THE WHICH --?
NEXT
THUNDER and LIGHTNING!

MARVEL COMICS
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
GROUNDED BY THE
LIGHTNING RODS
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
JUL
#16
BAGLEY
S. HANNA
BUSIEK
BAGLEY
HANNA
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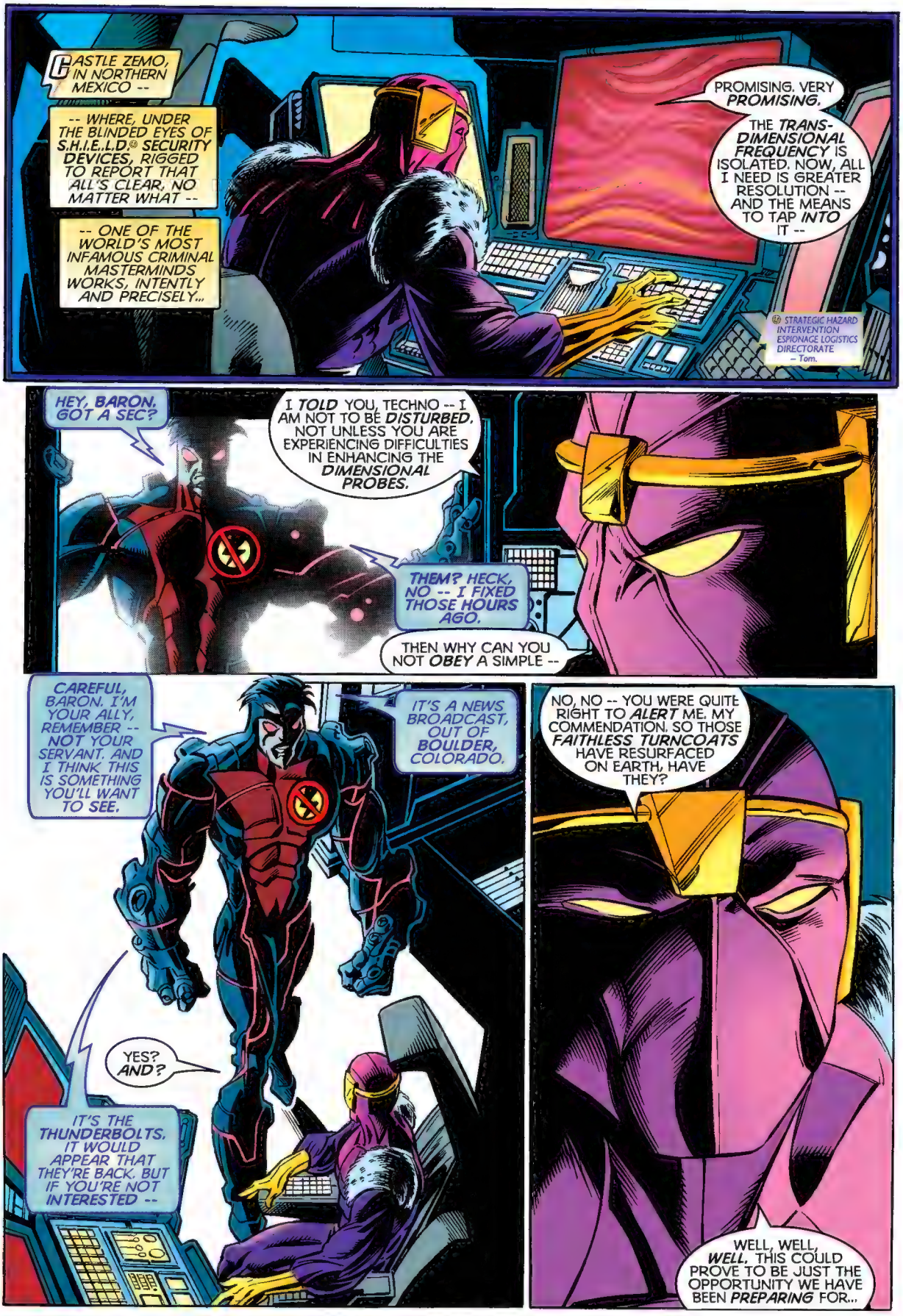
PLUS: ZEMO
AND
THE INCREDIBLE HULK
(OR A REASONABLE FACSIMILE)


CASTLE ZEMO, IN NORTHERN MEXICO --
-- WHERE, UNDER THE BLINDED EYES OF S.H.I.E.L.D.® SECURITY DEVICES, RIGGED TO REPORT THAT ALL'S CLEAR, NO MATTER WHAT --
-- ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST INFAMOUS CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS WORKS, INTENTLY AND PRECISELY...
PROMISING. VERY PROMISING.
THE TRANS-DIMENSIONAL FREQUENCY IS ISOLATED. NOW, ALL I NEED IS GREATER RESOLUTION -- AND THE MEANS TO TAP INTO IT --
® STRATEGIC HAZARD INTERVENTION ESPIONAGE LOGISTICS DIRECTORATE – Tom.
HEY, BARON. GOT A SEC?
I TOLD YOU, TECHNO -- I AM NOT TO BE DISTURBED, NOT UNLESS YOU ARE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN ENHANCING THE DIMENSIONAL PROBES.
THEM? HECK, NO -- I FIXED THOSE HOURS AGO.
THEN WHY CAN YOU NOT OBEY A SIMPLE --
CAREFUL, BARON. I'M YOUR ALLY, REMEMBER -- NOT YOUR SERVANT. AND I THINK THIS IS SOMETHING YOU'LL WANT TO SEE.
IT'S A NEWS BROADCAST, OUT OF BOULDER, COLORADO.
YES? AND?
IT'S THE THUNDERBOLTS. IT WOULD APPEAR THAT THEY'RE BACK. BUT IF YOU'RE NOT INTERESTED --
NO, NO -- YOU WERE QUITE RIGHT TO ALERT ME. MY COMMENDATION. SO THOSE FAITHLESS TURNCOATS HAVE RESURFACED ON EARTH, HAVE THEY?
WELL, WELL, WELL. THIS COULD PROVE TO BE JUST THE OPPORTUNITY WE HAVE BEEN PREPARING FOR...

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IT HAD ALL STARTED OFF SO **WELL** -- OR AT LEAST, **POTENTIALLY** SO. THE THUNDERBOLTS MADE IT BACK TO EARTH FROM THE DIMENSION OF **KOSMOS** --

-- BUT CHOSE **NOT** TO TURN THEMSELVES IN TO THE AUTHORITIES, TO FACE PRISON FOR THEIR ACTS AS BARON ZEMO'S **MASTERS OF EVIL.**

INSTEAD, THEY DECIDED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY WERE **REHABILITATED** -- BY ACTING AS **HEROES,** PROVING THEIR GOOD INTENTIONS --

-- AND WINNING THE **PUBLIC'S TRUST** ONCE MORE. BUT THEY HAVEN'T EXACTLY GOTTEN THE **CHANCE...**

YOU SMEARED OUR ***GOOD NAME,*** VILLAINS! DRAGGED US THROUGH THE ***MUD*** AND LEFT US TO PICK UP THE ***PIECES!***

WELL, YOU WON'T GET ***AWAY*** WITH IT! TODAY, YOU FACE --

-- THE VENGEANCE OF THE GREAT LAKES AVENGERS

Huh? WHAT IS HE *TALKING* ABOUT --?!

Oh, DON'T MIND ***FLATMAN.*** HE ***OFTEN*** GETS OUR NAME MIXED UP -- NOT TO MENTION HIS ***METAPHORS.*** WE'RE THE ***LIGHTNING RODS,*** THESE DAYS.

SO...WAIT. YOU NAMED YOURSELVES AFTER ***US*** -- AND NOW YOU WANT ***REVENGE?***

BLAME ***Mr. IMMORTAL*** HERE. ***HE*** CHANGED OUR NAME -- THOUGHT WE'D BENEFIT FROM BEING LINKED TO THE HOT NEW ***HERO TEAM*** ON THE SCENE.

OF COURSE, THAT WAS BEFORE YOU TURNED OUT TO BE ***CROOKS,*** AND PEOPLE STARTED TO FIGURE ***WE*** MUST BE, TOO --!

HEY, ***HEY!*** HOW WAS ***I*** TO KNOW? AND I ***DID*** MAKE UP FOR IT, RIGHT?

I GOT THIS CHANCE TO BRING IN THESE CREEPS FOR ***S.H.I.E.L.D.*** -- AND MAKE UP FOR THE DAMAGE THEY DID TO OUR ***REP!***

DAMAGE ***WE*** DID?! HEY, I ***READ*** ABOUT YOU. YOU WERE ***NEVER*** REAL AVENGERS! AND WE NEVER ***ASKED*** YOU TO --

MARVEL'S Stan Lee presents: MIGHTIEST MISCREANTS

THUNDER & LIGHTNING

HURT BUSIEK & MARK BAGLEY
STORYTELLERS

SCOTT HANNA
INKER

RS & COMICRAFT'S SIOBHAN HANNA
LETTERS

JOE ROSAS
COLORS

TOM BREVOORT
EDITOR

BOB HARRAS
CHIEF

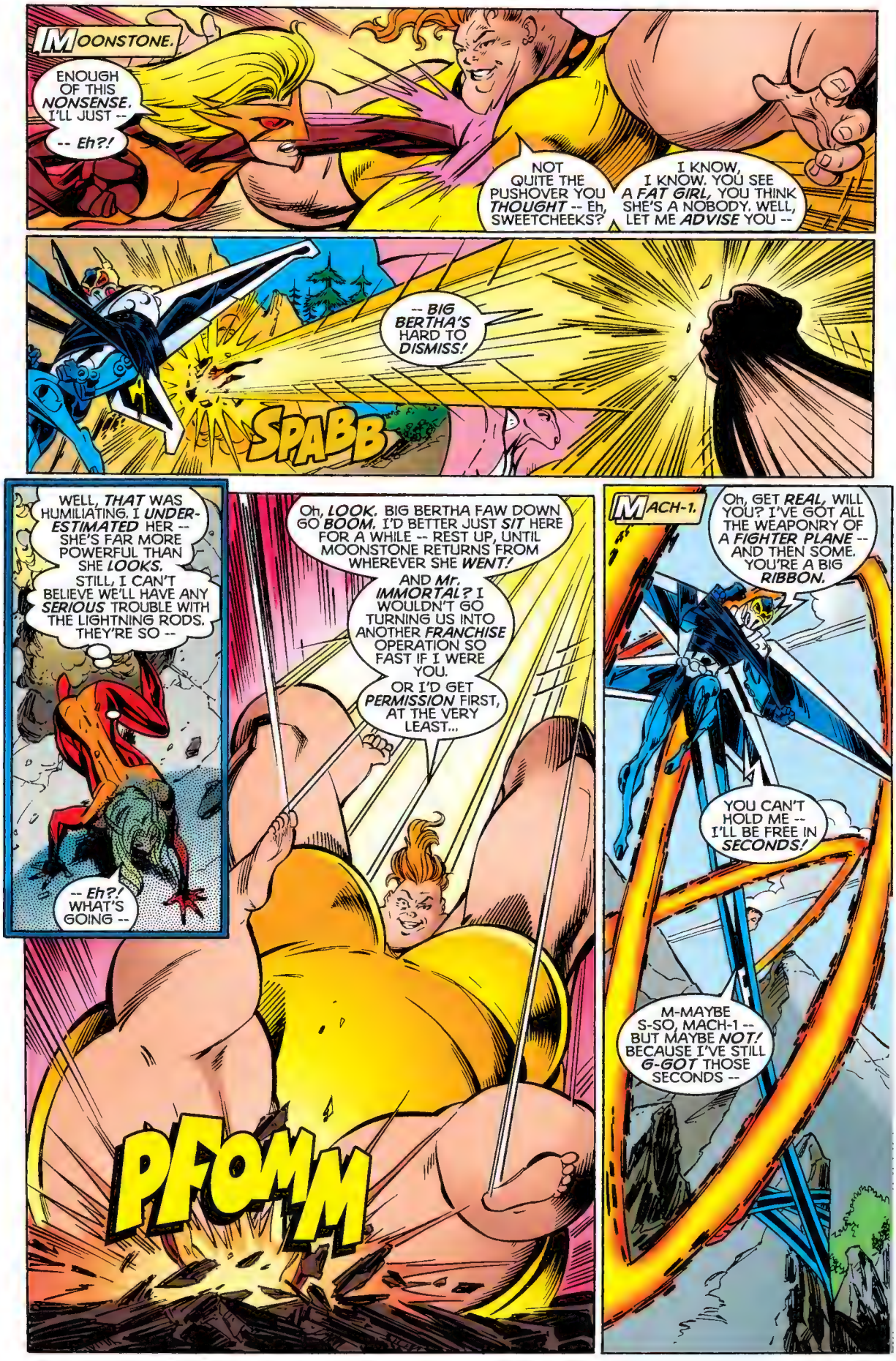
NOW ***THERE'S*** A THOUGHT! MAYBE IF THIS GOES WELL, WE COULD BE S.H.I.E.L.D.'S ENFORCEMENT ARM -- ***S.W.O.R.D.!***

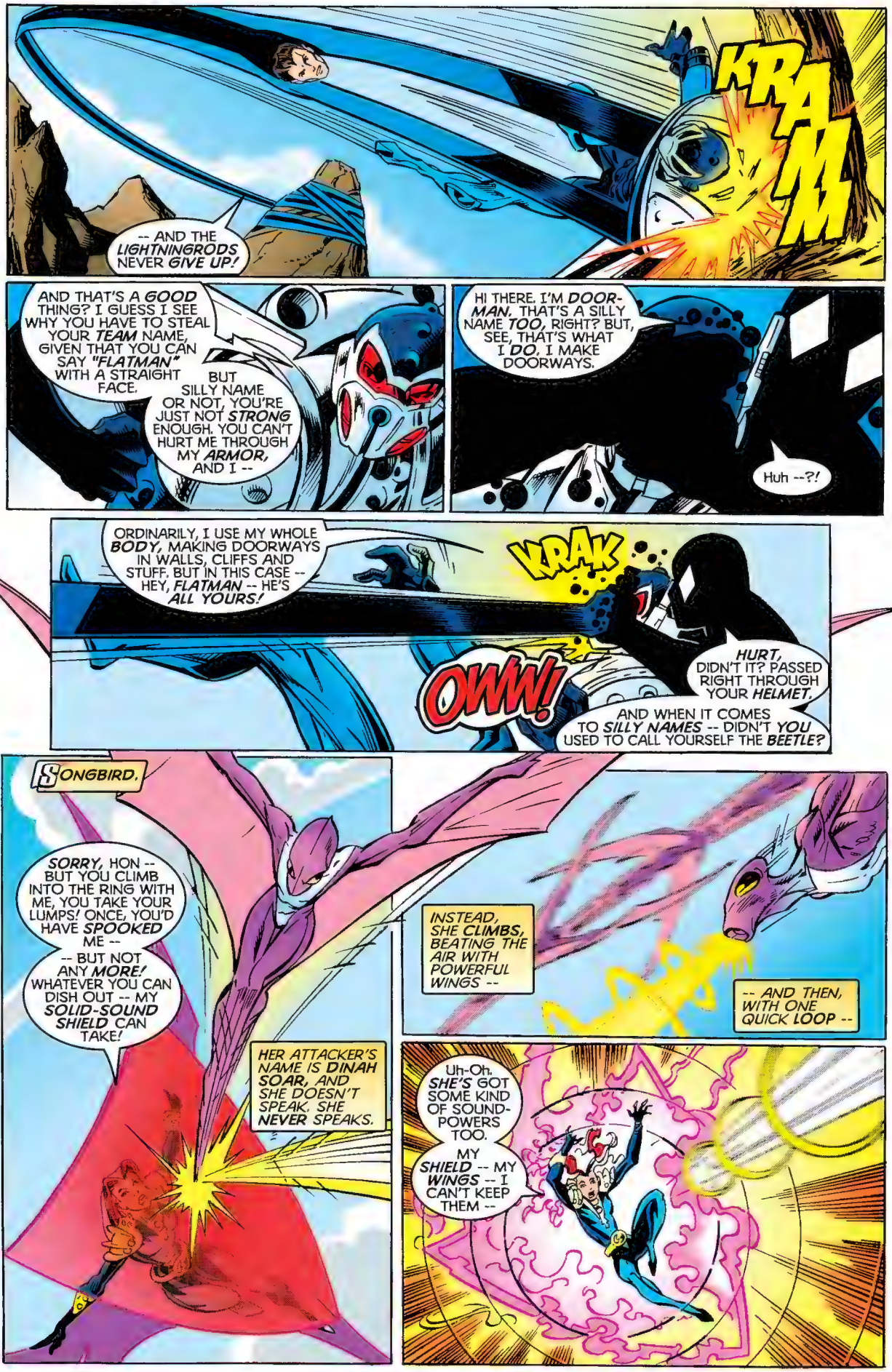
WE'D BE THE ***SUPERHUMAN WARRIORS OPERATION -- RETRIBUTION DIVISION!*** COOL, Huh?

RETRIBUTION ***DIVISION?*** I DON'T KNOW, Mr. I. WHAT WOULD THE ***OTHER*** DIVISIONS BE?

YOU'RE SO ***LITERAL,*** DOORMAN!

THE T-BOLTS REEL UNDER THE SUDDEN ASSAULT...BUT THEY'RE **EXPERIENCED PROS,** MOST OF THEM. THEY RALLY SWIFTLY...AND **RESPOND.**


MOONSTONE.
ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE. I'LL JUST --
-- Eh?!
NOT QUITE THE PUSHOVER YOU THOUGHT -- Eh, SWEETCHEEKS?
I KNOW, I KNOW. YOU SEE A FAT GIRL, YOU THINK SHE'S A NOBODY. WELL, LET ME ADVISE YOU --
-- BIG BERTHA'S HARD TO DISMISS!
SPABB
WELL, THAT WAS HUMILIATING. I UNDER-ESTIMATED HER -- SHE'S FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN SHE LOOKS.
STILL, I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'LL HAVE ANY SERIOUS TROUBLE WITH THE LIGHTNING RODS. THEY'RE SO --
-- Eh?! WHAT'S GOING --
Oh, LOOK. BIG BERTHA FAW DOWN GO BOOM. I'D BETTER JUST SIT HERE FOR A WHILE -- REST UP, UNTIL MOONSTONE RETURNS FROM WHEREVER SHE WENT!
AND Mr. IMMORTAL? I WOULDN'T GO TURNING US INTO ANOTHER FRANCHISE OPERATION SO FAST IF I WERE YOU.
OR I'D GET PERMISSION FIRST, AT THE VERY LEAST...
PFOMM
MACH-1.
Oh, GET REAL, WILL YOU? I'VE GOT ALL THE WEAPONRY OF A FIGHTER PLANE -- AND THEN SOME. YOU'RE A BIG RIBBON.
YOU CAN'T HOLD ME -- I'LL BE FREE IN SECONDS!
M-MAYBE S-SO, MACH-1 -- BUT MAYBE NOT! BECAUSE I'VE STILL G-GOT THOSE SECONDS --


KRAM
-- AND THE LIGHTNINGRODS NEVER GIVE UP!
AND THAT'S A GOOD THING? I GUESS I SEE WHY YOU HAVE TO STEAL YOUR TEAM NAME, GIVEN THAT YOU CAN SAY "FLATMAN" WITH A STRAIGHT FACE.
BUT SILLY NAME OR NOT, YOU'RE JUST NOT STRONG ENOUGH. YOU CAN'T HURT ME THROUGH MY ARMOR, AND I --
HI THERE. I'M DOOR-MAN. THAT'S A SILLY NAME TOO, RIGHT? BUT, SEE, THAT'S WHAT I DO. I MAKE DOORWAYS.
Huh --?!
ORDINARILY, I USE MY WHOLE BODY, MAKING DOORWAYS IN WALLS, CLIFFS AND STUFF. BUT IN THIS CASE -- HEY, FLATMAN -- HE'S ALL YOURS!
KRAK
OWW!
HURT, DIDN'T IT? PASSED RIGHT THROUGH YOUR HELMET.
AND WHEN IT COMES TO SILLY NAMES -- DIDN'T YOU USED TO CALL YOURSELF THE BEETLE?
SONGBIRD.
SORRY, HON -- BUT YOU CLIMB INTO THE RING WITH ME, YOU TAKE YOUR LUMPS! ONCE, YOU'D HAVE SPOOKED ME --
-- BUT NOT ANY MORE! WHATEVER YOU CAN DISH OUT -- MY SOLID-SOUND SHIELD CAN TAKE!
HER ATTACKER'S NAME IS DINAH SOAR, AND SHE DOESN'T SPEAK. SHE NEVER SPEAKS.
INSTEAD, SHE CLIMBS, BEATING THE AIR WITH POWERFUL WINGS --
-- AND THEN, WITH ONE QUICK LOOP --
Uh-Oh. SHE'S GOT SOME KIND OF SOUND-POWERS TOO.
MY SHIELD -- MY WINGS -- I CAN'T KEEP THEM --

OHHH!
SWAKK
JOLT.
THREE UP, THREE DOWN -- WHICH JUST LEAVES YOU, KID. SO SURRENDER -- YOU'RE NOT LIKE YOUR PALS, AFTER ALL. YOU'VE GOT NO RECORD... YET.
AND IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO GET AWAY -- S.H.I.E.L.D.'S GOT THIS VALLEY CORDONED OFF, AND NOBODY'S GETTING OUT BUT US!
GO AHEAD, LAUGH AT MY NAME SOME MORE! GO AHEAD!
I'M NOT SURRENDERING -- AND I'M NOT RUNNING! YOU DON'T KNOW THE T-BOLTS LIKE I DO -- AND I WON'T DESERT THEM!
WE COULD BEAT THESE GUYS -- I KNOW WE COULD -- BUT THERE'S ONLY FOUR OF US! IF ONLY WE KNEW WHY ATLAS LEFT -- WHERE HE WENT --!
Mmff! Mmmf!
WRAK
BRAK
KRAK
MADISON, WISCONSIN. NOT THE PART OF TOWN THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TAKES PRIDE IN.
CARL? CARL JOSTEN?
BAR
WHO WAN'S T'KNOW?
THEY TOLD ME AT THAT FLOPHOUSE THAT YOU'D BE HERE, BUT -- CARL, IT'S ME -- IT'S ERIK!
TRY ANOTH'R ONE, FELLA. ERIK DON' LOOK LIKE THAT -- AN' DON' SOUN' LIKE THAT, NEITHER.
I HAD MY FACE CHANGED, CARL -- MY VOICE, TOO. BUT IT'S ME.
REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE FIVE? YOU DARED ME TO JUMP INTA THE HAY-RICK -- BUT THERE WAS STILL A PITCHFORK IN THERE --
AN' I BEGGED YOU NOT T'TELL MA. AND YOU NEVER -- YOU -- ERIK?

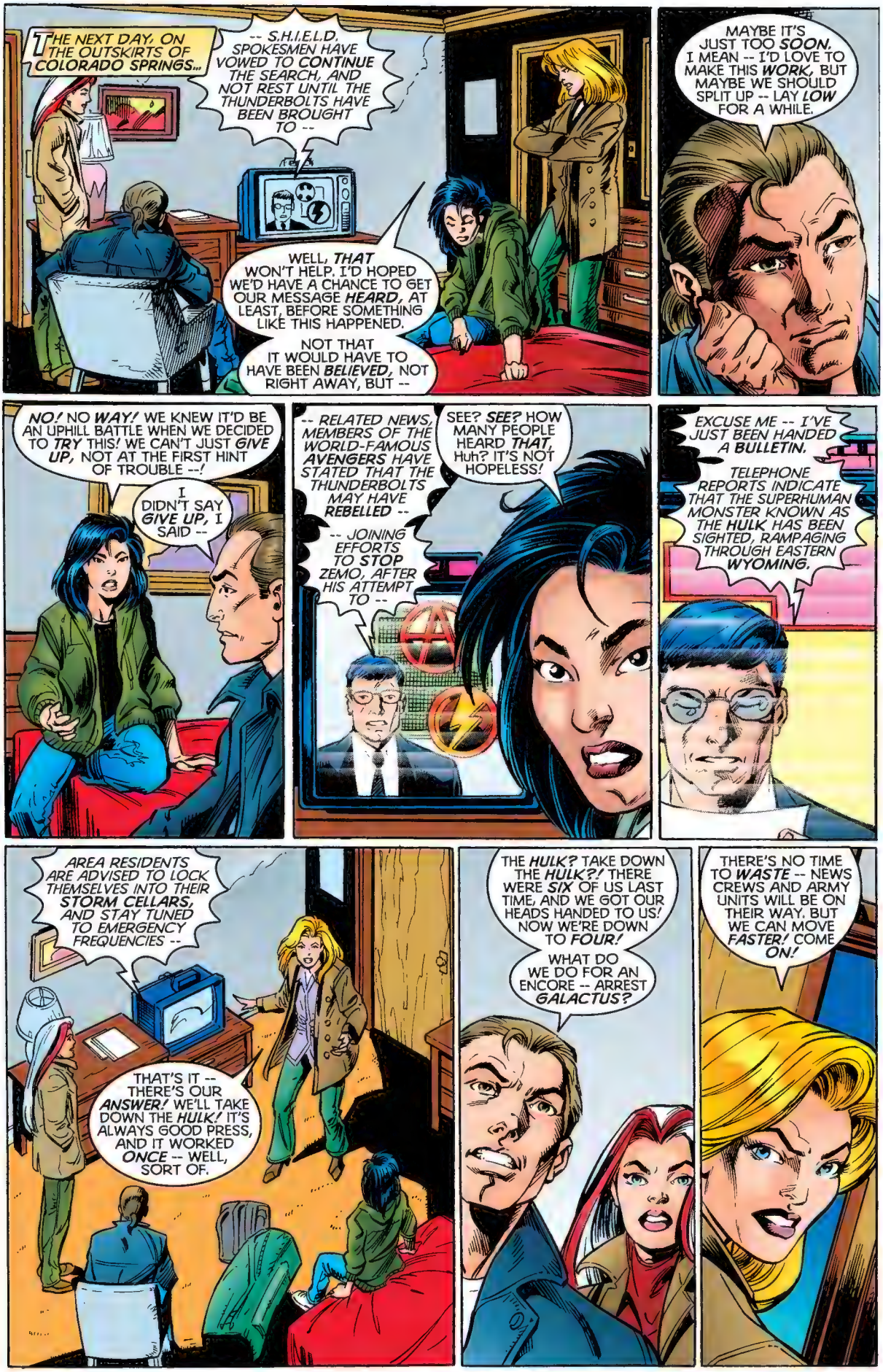
CARL, WHAT'S HAPPENED TO EVERYONE? I WENT TO THE FARM, BUT IT'S ALL BOARDED UP -- IT'S FALLIN' APART!
WHERE ARE MA AND PA -- WHERE'S CONRAD? THEY TOLD ME AT BILLY'S YOU'D MOVED TO TOWN, AN' SAID SOMETHING ABOUT OLD BILLS --
HE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE ME EITHER. LOOK, CARL, I JUST WANT TO FIND OUR FOLKS -- APOLOGIZE FOR HOW I --
Huh. SOUN'S LIKE BILLY, A'RIGHT. SURPRISED HE'D TALK T'YA, THOUGH -- SAID HE WAS DONE WITH US JOSTENS F'R GOOD --
WELL HELLO, CARL. SO YOU DIDN'T SKIP TOWN AFTER ALL.
MIS'ER DIRKSON!
YOU DO REMEMBER ME. IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE YOU PAID ANY OF THE INTEREST ON YOUR LOAN, I THOUGHT YOU'D FORGOTTEN.
WHERE'S MY MONEY, CARL?
LET ME GUESS -- YOU'RE THE LOCAL LOAN SHARK. WELL, TWO WORDS, PAL: PRIVATE CONVERSATION. SO TAKE A HIKE.
WATCH IT, PUNK -- OR YOU'LL GET SOME OF WHAT HE'S GETTING. I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, BUT --
I'M HIS BROTHER, DIRKSON. MAYBE NOT AS GOOD A BROTHER AS I SHOULD'VE BEEN -- BUT I'M TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF, AS OF NOW.
SO YOU WANT TO LEAN ON MY FAMILY? START WITH ME.
FINE, GUNNAR?
ERIK!
WRAK
UHH!
Oh -- Oh, MAN, ERIK --!
JOSTEN'S BROTHER. THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT HIM, SOMETHING --
-- aah, DOESN'T MATTER. GUNNAR, CALKINS -- TAKE THEM BOTH.

MEANWHILE...
GIVE IT UP, JOLT. YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME, SO --
Oh, IF I WANTED TO TOUCH YOU, RED, YOU'D BE UNCONSCIOUS! BUT I'VE JUST BEEN FEINTING --
-- SO I COULD GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO USE MY BIO-ELECTRIC POWERS --
-- TO HELP OUT MY TEAMMATE!
KZZT
GHEK!
MACH-1 -- PASS IT ON!
THANKS, JOLT -- THAT'S ALL I NEEDED! HEY, FLATMAN --
KRAM
-- YOU'VE GOT A STUPID NAME!
THERE. SO MUCH FOR HIM. NOW, WHO ELSE NEEDS A HAND? SONGBIRD?
FORGET IT, ABE -- I DON'T NEED A TAG-TEAM PARTNER, AND DON'T WANT ONE! I CAN KAYO SILENT SAL HERE MYSELF!
SHE'S FAST, AND MANEUVERABLE -- BUT IF I CAN JUST GET HER OFF MY TAIL --
NO SWEAT, HONEY. EVERYONE NEEDS HELP NOW AND THEN.
DINAH SOAR CHECKS. STARTLED -- AND --
HERE YOU GO, HONEYBUNCH! RIGHT BACK AT YOU -- WITH INTEREST!

Oh, MY BIG BRAVE HERO, MY SAVIOR, IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT ME TO SAY NOW, ABE?
Huh? NO, HONEY -- I WAS JUST --
"-- JUST TRYING TO PITCH IN --!"
LOOK AT THEM. THIRTY SECONDS AGO, THEY WERE AS GOOD AS BEATEN. BUT NOW --
-- I'VE GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS --!
YOU'VE GOT A BAD FEELING? IMAGINE WHAT IT'S BEEN LIKE FOR ME!
YOU! BUT -- BUT -- I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD DO THAT!
IF I GET A CHANCE TO CONCENTRATE, SURE. AND HEY --
SHRAKK
-- I CAN DO THIS, TOO!
DON'T LIKE IT MUCH, DO YOU? GOOD -- WE'RE EVEN.
MOMENTS LATER...
SO I'M THE ONLY ONE LEFT, Eh?
WELL, THAT'S FINE WITH ME! GO AHEAD, THUNDERBOLTS, DO YOUR WORST -- YOU CAN'T KILL ME, NO MATTER HOW HARD YOU TRY!
THAT'S WHY THEY CALL ME MISTER IMMORTAL!

Oh, IS IT?
SHUNK
WHAT A LUCKY BREAK FOR US THEY DON'T CALL YOU Mr. CONSCIOUS!
AND, SHORTLY, JUST OUTSIDE THE VALLEY...
BLAST IT, WHAT'S GOING ON DOWN THERE? I KNOW WE SAID WE'D STAY OUT OF IT -- BUT I SHOULD NEVER HAVE AGREED TO THAT!
DUFFY, IF WE HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THEM IN FIVE MINUTES, TAKE YOUR MEN AND --
AHOY! AHOY, COLONEL BRIDGE!
Eh?
WE GOT 'EM, BOSS! CLEANED THEIR CLOCKS, JUST LIKE WE PROMISED!
Huh?
SO WHERE IN HADES ARE THEY? DON'T TELL ME YOU LET THEM GET AWAY!
NOT A CHANCE, BIG GUY! WE, Ah -- THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO SECURE THEM -- SO WE LEFT THEM IN A CLEARING BACK IN THE WOODS!
NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US, WE GOTTA GO. WE HEARD Dr. DEMONICUS IS THREATENING DULUTH, SO --
AND GOOD RIDDANCE! OF ALL THE UNPROFESSIONAL, IDIOTIC --! DUFFY! GET A SQUAD IN THERE -- NOW!
I WANT THOSE PRISONERS READY FOR TRANSPORT -- TEN MINUTES AGO!
MINUTES LATER...
PHEW! I'LL TELL YOU, I DIDN'T THINK THAT WAS GOING FOR WORK FOR A SECOND! IF HE'D GOTTEN ONE GOOD LOOK AT YOU, MOONSTONE --
-- WELL, I DON'T THINK HE'D HAVE BOUGHT THOSE CURVES AS DOORMAN --!
BUT WE MADE IT, ABE --
MR.

-- AND THAT'S WHAT COUNTS. STILL, THEY WON'T BE FOOLED FOR LONG, SONGBIRD, IF YOU WOULD --?
SURE, NO PROB. LET ME JUST GET RID OF THIS STUPID SOLID-SOUND PTERODACTYL HEAD --
-- AND THEN IT'S BIG BERTHA'S TURN. C'MON, BABY --
-- INSTANT WEIGHT-LOSS TIME!
SO -- WHO WANTS THEIR REAL UNIFORMS BACK?
QUIT GLOATING, MELISSA -- WE DON'T HAVE TIME. EVERYONE GET DRESSED AND SPLIT UP. WE'LL MEET BACK AT THE BACK-UP HIDEAWAY IN HALF AN HOUR.
LATER...
-- KNOWN AS THE THUNDERBOLTS CLASHED WITH AUTHORITIES TODAY, BATTLING BOTH S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS AND SUPER HEROES --
THE FUGITIVES, WHO TOOK PART IN A RECENT ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD BY FORCE, ELUDED PURSUIT, AND --
THEY'VE STAYED TOGETHER. AND THE YOUNG IDEALIST IS WITH THEM.
THEY MUST BE ATTEMPTING TO REGAIN RESPECTABILITY. THERE IS NO OTHER ANSWER, NOT WITH HER THERE.
A FOOLHARDY STRATEGY -- AND ALMOST AMUSING ENOUGH TO MERIT JUST WATCHING AS IT FAILS. BUT NO -- TECHNO, HOW ARE YOUR ROBOTICS SKILLS?
HOW'S YOUR GERMAN? I CAN SHIFT THIS BODY INTO WHATEVER FORM I WANT AND THEN ABANDON IT FOR ANOTHER, YOU KNOW THAT.
SO IF IT'S MECHANICAL, I CAN MAKE IT -- IN MINUTES. BUT OUR APPARATUS IS FINE -- WHY WOULD --
I DO NOT EXPECT YOU TO UNDERSTAND. FOR ALL YOUR ABILITY, YOU ARE NO STRATEGIST. NOW LISTEN CLOSELY -- WE'LL NEED TO ACT SWIFTLY...
AND AS ZEMO'S VOICE RESONATES THROUGH THE VAULTED HALLS --
-- IT'S OVERHEARD --


THE NEXT DAY, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF COLORADO SPRINGS...
-- S.H.I.E.L.D. SPOKESMEN HAVE VOWED TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH, AND NOT REST UNTIL THE THUNDERBOLTS HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO --
WELL, THAT WON'T HELP. I'D HOPED WE'D HAVE A CHANCE TO GET OUR MESSAGE HEARD, AT LEAST, BEFORE SOMETHING LIKE THIS HAPPENED.
NOT THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO HAVE BEEN BELIEVED, NOT RIGHT AWAY, BUT --
MAYBE IT'S JUST TOO SOON. I MEAN -- I'D LOVE TO MAKE THIS WORK, BUT MAYBE WE SHOULD SPLIT UP -- LAY LOW FOR A WHILE.
NO! NO WAY! WE KNEW IT'D BE AN UPHILL BATTLE WHEN WE DECIDED TO TRY THIS! WE CAN'T JUST GIVE UP, NOT AT THE FIRST HINT OF TROUBLE --!
I DIDN'T SAY GIVE UP, I SAID --
-- RELATED NEWS, MEMBERS OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS AVENGERS HAVE STATED THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS MAY HAVE REBELLED --
-- JOINING EFFORTS TO STOP ZEMO, AFTER HIS ATTEMPT TO --
SEE? SEE? HOW MANY PEOPLE HEARD THAT, Huh? IT'S NOT HOPELESS!
EXCUSE ME -- I'VE JUST BEEN HANDED A BULLETIN.
TELEPHONE REPORTS INDICATE THAT THE SUPERHUMAN MONSTER KNOWN AS THE HULK HAS BEEN SIGHTED, RAMPAGING THROUGH EASTERN WYOMING.
AREA RESIDENTS ARE ADVISED TO LOCK THEMSELVES INTO THEIR STORM CELLARS, AND STAY TUNED TO EMERGENCY FREQUENCIES --
THAT'S IT -- THERE'S OUR ANSWER! WE'LL TAKE DOWN THE HULK! IT'S ALWAYS GOOD PRESS, AND IT WORKED ONCE -- WELL, SORT OF.
THE HULK? TAKE DOWN THE HULK?! THERE WERE SIX OF US LAST TIME, AND WE GOT OUR HEADS HANDED TO US! NOW WE'RE DOWN TO FOUR!
WHAT DO WE DO FOR AN ENCORE -- ARREST GALACTUS?
THERE'S NO TIME TO WASTE -- NEWS CREWS AND ARMY UNITS WILL BE ON THEIR WAY. BUT WE CAN MOVE FASTER! COME ON!

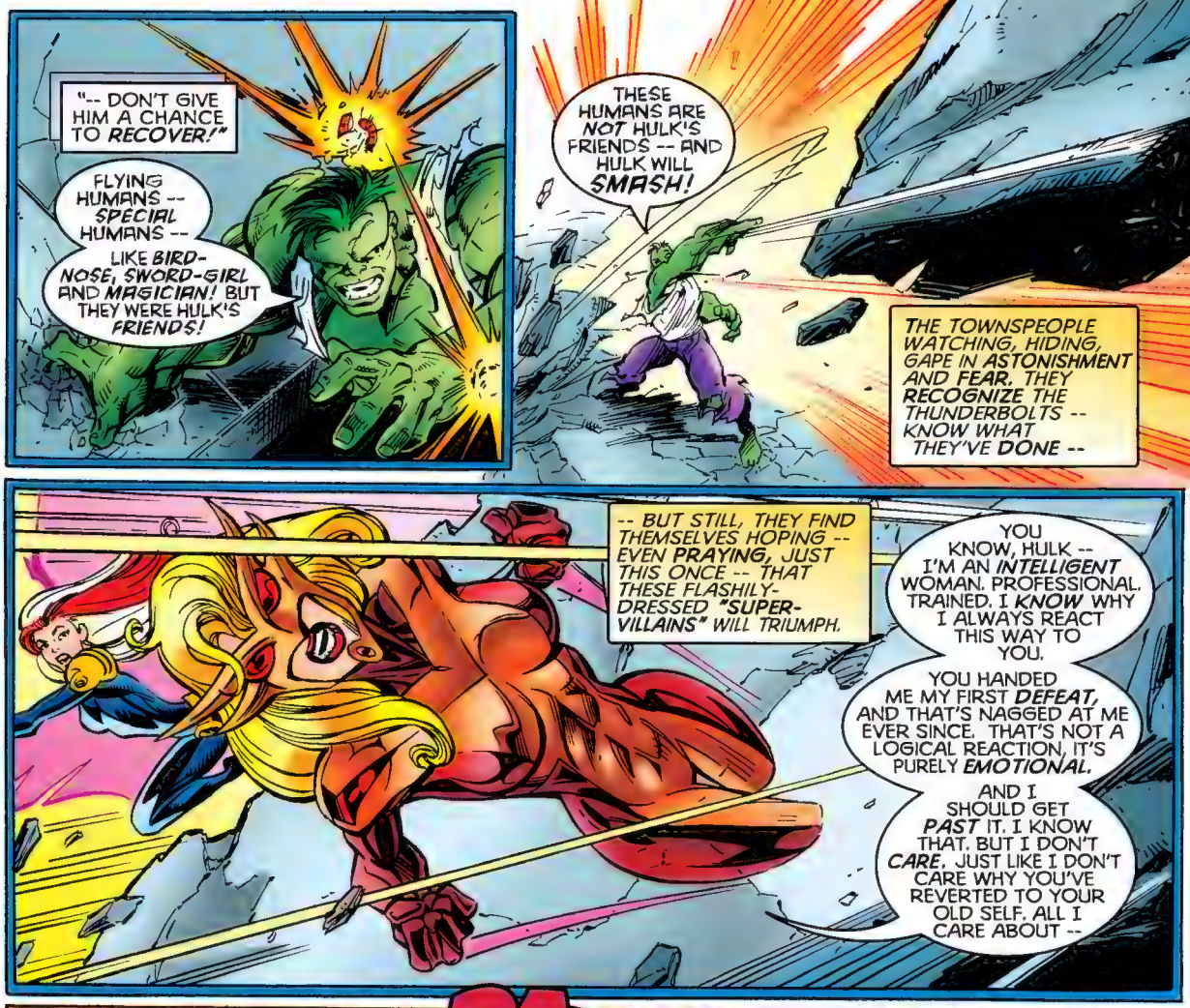
BUT AS JOLT AND SONG-BIRD MOVE TO FOLLOW MOONSTONE...
MELISSA, WAIT. I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THIS. DO WE REALLY WANT TO JUMP WHENEVER KARLA SAYS HOP?
SHE'S NOT EXACTLY RATIONAL ABOUT THE HULK -- AND THEN THERE'S WHAT HAPPENED ON KOSMOS --①
①SHE KILLED THE KOSMONIAN RULER IN COLD BLOOD – WITH ABE AND MELISSA WATCHING. – Tom.
WHAT'RE YOU -- SCARED, ABE? YOU WANT TO BACK DOWN? ONLY FIGHT SMALL-TIMERS? WELL, YOU STAY HERE AND HIDE IF YOU WANT --
-- BUT THAT'S NOT HOW SCREAMING MIMI PLAYS THE GAME!
Oh, GREAT. WE'RE WANTED IN EVERY COUNTRY ON THE PLANET, WE'RE BEING LED BY A SOCIOPATH --
-- AND MELISSA'S SINKING DEEPER AND DEEPER INTO HER OLD COSTUMED-WRESTLER ATTITUDE! SO TELL YOURSELF, JENKINS. IF THIS IS A GOOD PLAN --
"-- WHAT DOES TROUBLE FEEL LIKE --?"
Ohhhh...
MAN, I'VE GOT TO GET USED TO NOT HAVIN' SOMEONE WATCHIN' MY BACK. HEY, CARL, YOU THERE? MY HANDS ARE TIED, BUT THAT'S NO PROBLEM.
LOOKS LIKE THEY TOSSED US IN THE BACK OF AN OLD CAR, BUT I'LL GET US --
KRNKK
WHAT IN --?! OHMIGOD! CARL!
"WE'RE IN A CAR CRUSHER!"
KRNKK
NEAT. NICE AND NEAT. IN A FEW SECONDS, THEY'LL BE GONE FOREVER -- AND A VALUABLE MESSAGE WILL BE SENT.
NOBODY HOLDS OUT ON GUS --

DIRKSON!!
KRKSHREKK
Oh, LORD! JOSTEN'S BROTHER! HE'S -- HE'S --
YOU BET I AM, DIRKSON -- TOO BAD FOR YOU, Huh?
NO -- PLEASE --!
YOU TRIED TO KILL ME -- TRIED TO KILL MY BROTHER! AN' THE ONLY REASON I DON'T RETURN THE FAVOR IS, IT'S MY TURN TO SEND A MESSAGE!
TO YOU, AN' ALL THE OTHER PUNKS LIKE YOU!
CARL JOSTEN IS UNDER MY PROTECTION! UNDERSTAND?!
YES! YES! I UNDERSTAND!
JUST -- JUST LET ME DOWN!

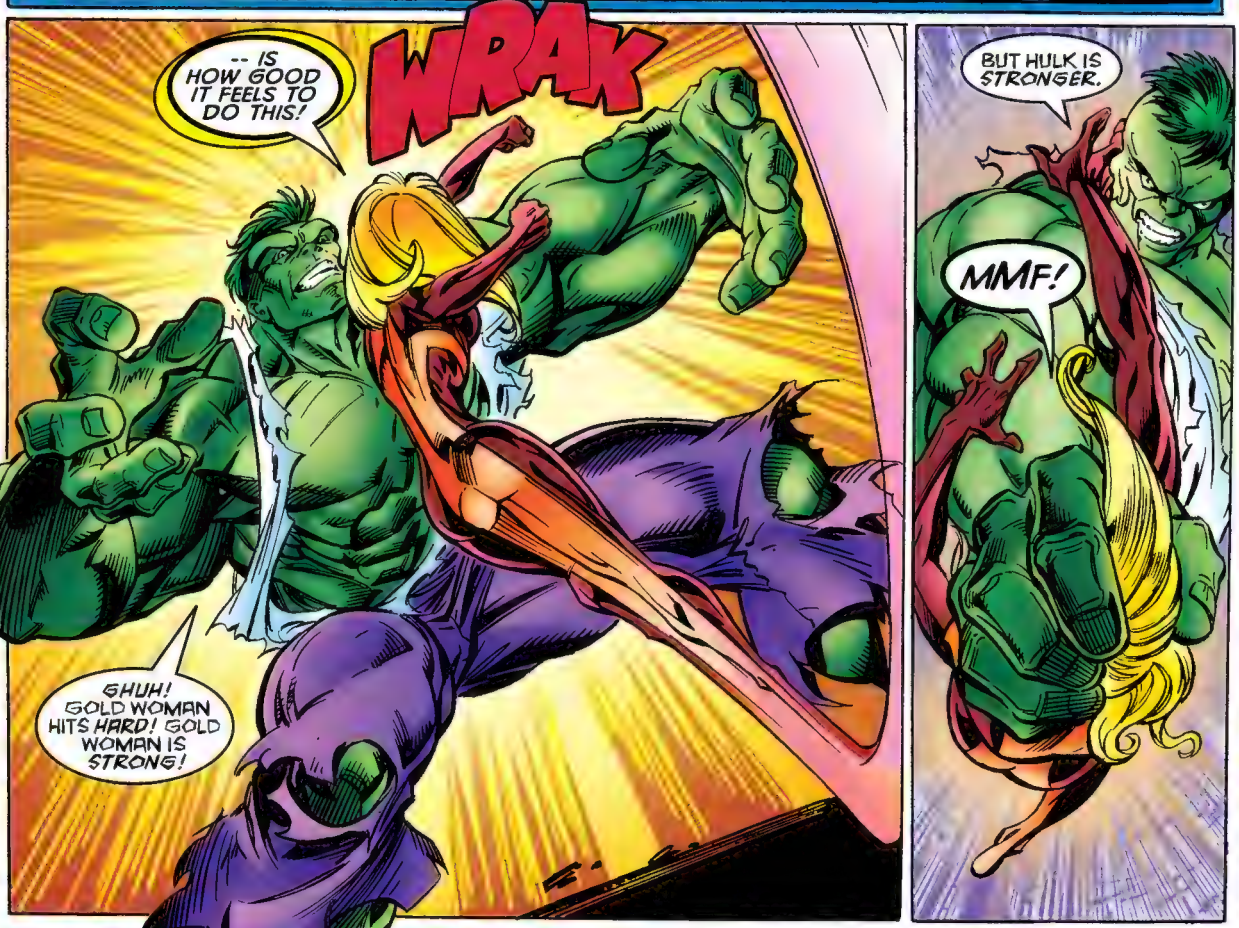
MOMENTS LATER...
THAT OUGHTTA DO IT. HE WON'T BE BOTHERIN' YOU AGAIN, CARL...
TH-THANKS -- BUT I THINK... IT'S TOO LATE...
WHAT DO YOU -- OH, MAN! THEY SHOT YOU, CARL -- SHOT YOU! MUST'VE BEEN WHILE I WAS OUT -- BEFORE THEY THREW YOU IN THE CAR WITH ME!
GEEZ, THAT LOOKS BAD --!
BAD... ENOUGH, LITTLE BROTHER. BAD ENOUGH...
WHAT -- WHAT HAPPENED, CARL? HOW DID EVERYTHING -- HOW DID IT ALL GO SO WRONG --?
YOU... YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW, DO YOU? IT WAS... AFTER LINDY GOT KILLED... AFTER SHE DIED, AN' YOU LEFT.
IT WAS WHEN YOU... SHOWED UP AS POWER MAN, THAT FIRST... TIME YOU GOT CAPTURED BY THE AVENGERS.
IT MADE THE PAPERS HERE... IN A BIG WAY. LOCAL BOY... MAKES BAD, YOU KNOW?
"THE FAMILY WAS... DISGRACED, NOBODY'D DO BUSINESS WITH US... OUR CREDIT WAS CUT OFF AT BILLY'S STORE...
"... AN' AFTER THAT, IT WAS... JUST A MATTER OF TIME."
AL S
©AVENGERS #21-22 - Tom.

"THE FARM WENT BANKRUPT.
"AN' IT...WASN'T LONG AFTER THAT, THE FOLKS GOT SICK AN' DIED, IT WAS LIKE...LIKE THE HEART HAD GONE OUT OF 'EM."
PUBLIC AUCTION
SOLD
CONRAD...HE MOVED AWAY, CHANGED HIS NAME, FROM WHAT I HEARD...
Oh, GEEZ --
...AN' THAT JUST LEFT ME... DOIN' WHAT ODD JOBS I COULD FIND...HITTIN' THE SAUCE TOO MUCH...
I'M SO...SO SORRY, CARL. IT'S ALL MY FAULT. I FAILED YOU -- LIKE I'VE FAILED EVERYONE ELSE --
S'OKAY, LITTLE BROTHER. STUFF...HAPPENS. AT LEAST... YOU WERE HERE FOR ME...AT... END...
HIS BROTHER'S BREATHING GROWS RAGGED -- AND FAINTER, EVER FAINTER, AND ERIK JOSTEN KNOWS --
-- HE KNOWS HE'S BETRAYED HIM, LIKE HE HAS ANYONE WHO EVER MEANT ANYTHING IN HIS LIFE -- LIKE HE'S BETRAYED EVERYONE --
NO!
I'M NOT LETTING YOU GO, CARL -- NOT FAILING YOU AGAIN! I'LL GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL -- IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT. YOU'LL SEE, CARL -- YOU'LL SEE --
AND AS ERIK BEARS HIS BROTHER AWAY, DESPERATE, HIS HEART POUNDING --
-- THE TOWNSPEOPLE OF COTTONWOOD, WYOMING FEEL A DESPERATION OF A DIFFERENT KIND.
THEY'VE WEATHERED TORNADOES HERE, AS WELL AS FLOODS, DROUGHTS, AND HARD TIMES --
-- BUT NEVER, EXCEPT ON THE TELEVISION NEWS, HAS THE TOWN OF COTTONWOOD --

-- SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS.
WHEREVER HULK GOES, PUNY HUMANS HOUND HULK -- WON'T LET HULK ALONE -- WON'T LET HULK REST. AND HULK IS SICK OF IT.
HULK HAS WARNED PUNY HUMANS. BUT THEY HAVE IGNORED HULK --
-- AND NOW HULK WILL MAKE THEM ALL PAY!
THIS -- THIS IS CRAZY! WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING TO HIM! HE JUST SHOWED UP, STARTED YELLIN' ABOUT HOW WE'D ATTACKED HIM -- -- AN' SET IN TO WRECKIN' THINGS!
THE NATIONAL GUARD -- HAS THERE BEEN ANY WORD --?
THEY'RE STILL HALF AN HOUR AWAY! AND THE WAY HE'S GOING -- WE WON'T LAST THAT --
GET BACK, EVERYONE! WE'LL DEAL WITH THE HULK!
HUH? WHO COMES --?
H-UHH!
SHKRKAMM
SOMETHING'S SCREWY HERE. HE USED TO BE SMARTER THAN THIS --!
WORRY ABOUT IT LATER, MACH-1! JUST KEEP POURING IT ON --


"-- DON'T GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO RECOVER!"
FLYING HUMANS -- SPECIAL HUMANS --
LIKE BIRD-NOSE, SWORD-GIRL AND MAGICIAN! BUT THEY WERE HULK'S FRIENDS!
THESE HUMANS ARE NOT HULK'S FRIENDS -- AND HULK WILL SMASH!
THE TOWNSPEOPLE WATCHING, HIDING, GAPE IN ASTONISHMENT AND FEAR. THEY RECOGNIZE THE THUNDERBOLTS -- KNOW WHAT THEY'VE DONE --

-- BUT STILL, THEY FIND THEMSELVES HOPING -- EVEN PRAYING, JUST THIS ONCE -- THAT THESE FLASHILY-DRESSED "SUPER-VILLAINS" WILL TRIUMPH.
YOU KNOW, HULK -- I'M AN INTELLIGENT WOMAN. PROFESSIONAL. TRAINED. I KNOW WHY I ALWAYS REACT THIS WAY TO YOU.
YOU HANDED ME MY FIRST DEFEAT, AND THAT'S NAGGED AT ME EVER SINCE. THAT'S NOT A LOGICAL REACTION, IT'S PURELY EMOTIONAL.
AND I SHOULD GET PAST IT. I KNOW THAT. BUT I DON'T CARE. JUST LIKE I DON'T CARE WHY YOU'VE REVERTED TO YOUR OLD SELF. ALL I CARE ABOUT --


WRAK
-- IS HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO DO THIS!
GHUH! GOLD WOMAN HITS HARD! GOLD WOMAN IS STRONG!
BUT HULK IS STRONGER.
MMF!

LET HER GO, HULK!
KZAK
SHASH
THAT'S IT, JOLT! HIT HIM! KEEP IT UP!
Oh, BELIEVE ME, I'M NOT GOING TO STOP -- I'M GIVING HIM EVERYTHING I'VE GOT!
BUT I'M STARTING TO THINK THAT MACH-1 HAD A POINT --!
ZKKKKK
GLOW-EYES GIRL HURTS HULK'S HEAD! LIKE ZZZAX! LIKE LIVING LIGHTNING MEN! BUT GLOW-EYES GIRL WILL NOT STOP HULK! HULK WILL --
HULK WILL -- HULK WILL --
Huh? WHAT'S HE --?
AAAAAAH!
GLOW-EYES GIRL DOES NOT HURT HULK ANY MORE.
GO AWAY, GLOW-EYES GIRL AND GOLD WOMAN. YOU CANNOT HURT HULK.
HULK IS TOO STRONG FOR YOU.
WHOOM

ANOTHER HUMAN!
HUMAN WITH AIRPLANE WINGS!
SHRAMMMM
I DON'T CARE ABOUT MOONSTONE'S GRUDGE, HULK -- BUT I DON'T LIKE THIS!
WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? WHY ARE YOU HERE? WHY HAVEN'T WE HEARD ABOUT YOU ACTING THIS WAY AGAIN?
BAH! HULK WILL NOT ANSWER AIRPLANE WINGS'S QUESTIONS!
AIRPLANE WINGS TRIES TO HURT HULK! BUT NOTHING CAN HURT HULK!
HULK WILL DO THE HURTING --
-- BECAUSE HULK IS THE STRONGEST ONE THERE IS!
WELL, I GOT HIS ATTENTION, ANYWAY -- EVEN IF A FULL- POWER FORCE-BLAST SHOULD HAVE HURT HIM MORE THAN THAT.
SO I HOPE YOU'RE READY, SONGBIRD. I GOT HIM UP HERE, LIKE YOU WANTED, AND NOW --
-- IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
UFF!
WHAM
NICE GOING, HON! YOU REALLY NAILED HIM! BUT -- WHAT'S WRONG?
I DON'T -- I DON'T KNOW! I FEEL --
YOUR SOUND-CONSTRUCT, SONGBIRD! IT'S GLOWING -- COLLAPSING INWARD! ALMOST AS IF --
VMMMM

"-- HE'S ABSORBING IT!"
PUNY HUMANS! YOU FLY AND YOU SHOOT THINGS AT HULK AND YOU HIT HULK!
BUT ALL YOU DO IS MAKE HULK MAD! AND THE MADDER HULK GETS --
-- THFF!
Oh, SHUT UP.
THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING ODD GOING ON HERE, HULK -- BUT FRANKLY, I'D JUST AS SOON FIGURE IT OUT FROM YOUR CHARRED CORPSE.
YOU ABSORB ENERGY NOW? SEE IF YOU CAN ABSORB THIS!
GOLD WOMAN IS STUPID.
GOLD WOMAN IS JUST MAKING HULK STRONGER.
AND WHEN HULK REACHES GOLD WOMAN --
I SAID SHUT UP! YEARS OF RUNNING, HULK! YEARS OF JAIL! ALL THOSE YEARS, AND IT ALL STARTED WITH --
WHKSSH
WH-WHAT?! HIS FACE -- IT CAN'T BE! HE'S --
WELL, THAT EXPLAINS A LOT. STILL THINK THIS WAS A BRIGHT MOVE, KARLA?
-- HE'S A ROBOT --!
AH WELL. THAT STRESS THEY WERE SUBJECTING IT TO --
YES, I SUPPOSE IT COULDN'T LAST. STILL, THEY'VE DISCOVERED THE TRUTH TOO LATE. MAN THE PROBE CONTROLS, TECHNO.
I'M ON IT, BARON. WE'RE ALMOST AT THE THRESHOLD --!
AND AS THE TWO MEN TURN TO THEIR TASKS, THEY FAIL TO HEAR A LOW, PURPOSEFUL VOICE, HIGH ABOVE THEM.
"NO, BARON," THE VOICE SAYS --

-- THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE *MINE* --!
NEXT:
A NEW CITIZEN V?!
PLUS: MORE ON ATLAS, MORE ON THE ROBO-HULK, MORE ON ZEMO'S PLAN -- AND OH, YES -- GRAVITON!
DON'T MISS IT!

MARVEL COMICS
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
AUG
#17
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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BUSIEK
BAGLEY
HANNA

COTTONWOOD, WYOMING.
THE THUNDERBOLTS -- FUGITIVE SUPER-VILLAINS, ON THE RUN FROM THE POLICE AND S.H.I.E.L.D.© -- CAME HERE ON A MISSION OF MERCY.
THEY HOPED THAT IF THEY DEFEATED THE RAMPAGING HULK, SAVED THE TOWN, IT WOULD HELP CONVINCE THE WORLD THAT THEY'D REFORMED --
-- THAT THEY DESERVED FORGIVENESS FOR THEIR EARLIER CRIMINAL ACTS.
BUT THAT WAS BEFORE THEY DISCOVERED THAT THE HULK WAS --
A ROBOT?
A ROBOT?
© STRATEGIC HAZARD INTERVENTION ESPIONAGE LOGISTICS DIRECTORATE --GOTTA-SAY-IT-ONCE- AN-ISSUE -- Tom.

HURT BUSIEK & MARK BAGLEY
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RS & COMICRAFT'S SIOBHAN HANNA
LETTERS

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BOB HARRAS
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MARVEL'S Stan Lee presents...

MATTERS OF GRAVITY

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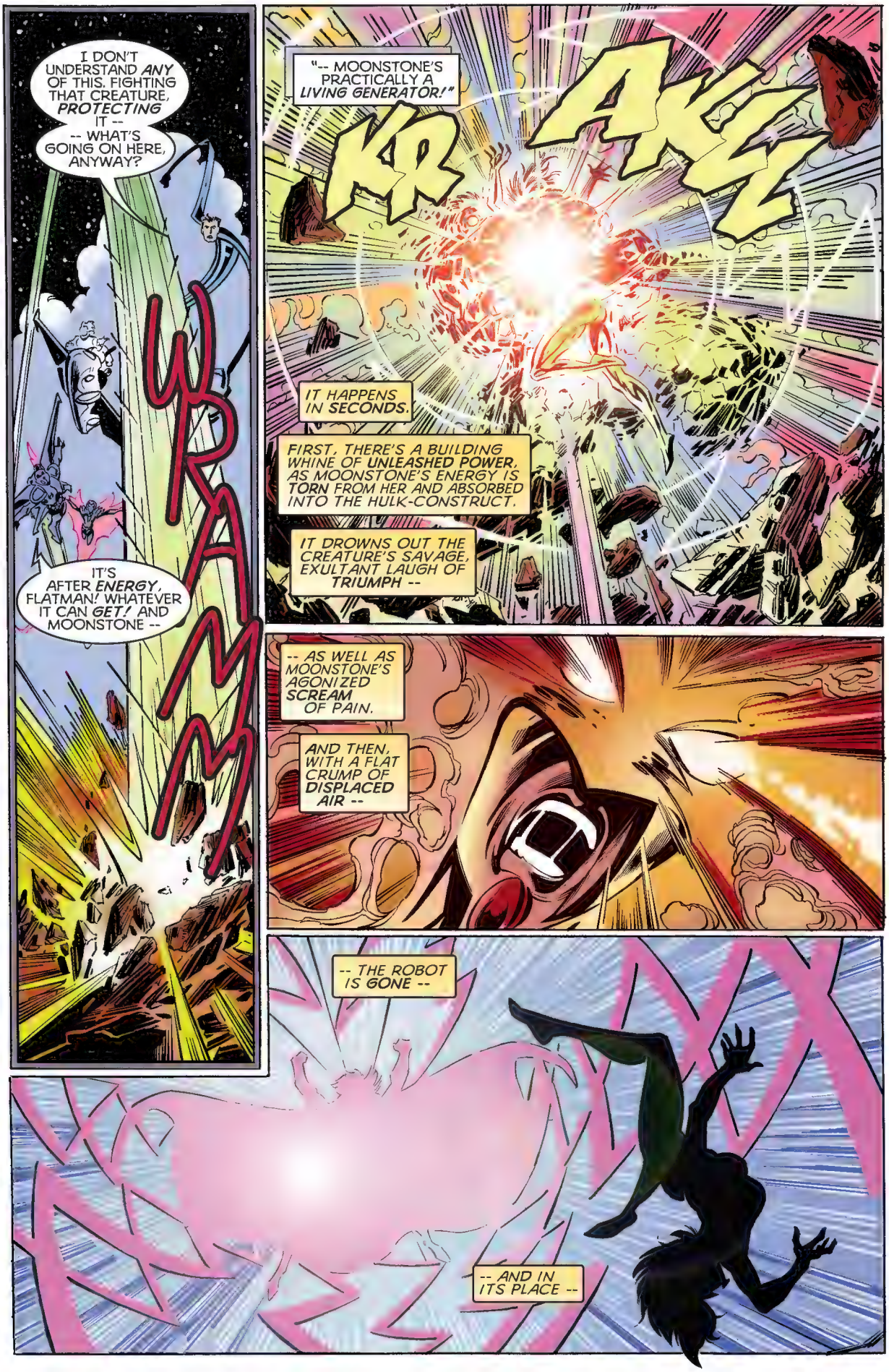
WHAT -- WHAT'S GOING ON?
I THOUGHT THAT WAS THE HULK, BUT -- IT'S SOME KIND OF -- MACHINE!
BUT -- BUT WHY WOULD ANYONE --
MAYBE IT WAS THE THUNDERBOLTS! THEY PRETENDED TO BE HEROES BEFORE --
-- MAYBE THIS IS ALL ONE OF THEIR SCAMS!
WELL IT WON'T WORK! I'M GETTIN' ALL THE EVIDENCE -- ON VIDEO!
PUNY HUMANS! HOUNDED HULK! TRIED TO HURT HULK!
RRRRAAH
BUT HULK WILL MAKE THEM --
-- PGHH!
LOOK OUT, JOLT! HE'S ATTACKING!
TH -- THANKS, SONGBIRD!
BUT -- YOU'D BETTER DISSOLVE YOUR SOLID-SOUND CONSTRUCT --
"-- BEFORE HE --
"-- TOO LATE! HE'S ABSORBING IT -- LIKE HE DID LAST TIME!"
LAST ISSUE -- Tom.
FINE!
HE'S BEEN ABSORBING SOUND-ENERGY -- POWER-BLASTS -- LET'S SEE HIM ABSORB --
WRAK

"-- THIS!"
KRRMBL
Uh, MOONSTONE --
-- THAT'D BE KINETIC ENERGY, AND IT SOUNDS --
BRKKBRM
KRAM
"-- LIKE HE'S ABSORBING IT JUST FINE!"
STUPID HUMANS! HULK CANNOT -- SQURK -- BE HURT BY DROPPING BUILDING ON HIM!
HULK CANNOT BE -- SKXX -- HURT BY ANYTH -- SKWX!
HE'S DAMAGED! QUICK -- FINISH HIM OFF!
NO!
MACH-1?
ITS ARMS -- THOSE ARE INDUCTION COILS! IT'S DRAWING IN ENERGY -- STORING IT! IT MUST BE DOING IT FOR A REASON --
-- SO HOLD OFF -- BEFORE WE FEED IT ENOUGH TO ACCOMPLISH WHATEVER IT'S DESIGNED FOR!
THEY'RE -- THEY'RE BACKING OFF!
ARE THEY -- GOING TO DESERT US?!
BUT AT THAT MOMENT...

YEEEHAHH!
LIGHTNING RODS TO THE RESCUE!
WHA --?
FLATMAN, DINAH SOAR -- FLANK THAT THING! DOORMAN, BIG BERTHA -- GET AROUND BEHIND IT!
ME, I'M GOING TO --
Oh, NUTS!
AIP!
HULK SQUAWRK!
Mr. IMMORTAL -- YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO US! STAY BACK -- DON'T ATTACK THAT ROBOT!
YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT? YOU BEAT US -- HUMILIATED US -- AND NOW YOU WANT US TO LISTEN TO YOU?
FOR PETE'S SAKE -- YOU LEFT SOME OF US NAKED!
BESIDES, THIS IS PROBABLY JUST SOME NEW CON GAME OF YOURS -- SO AS OF NOW, THE LIGHTNING RODS ARE TAKING --
AGAIN, LAST ISSUE -- Tom.
WE CAN'T LET THEM ATTACK THE ROBOT! WHATEVER HAPPENS, WHATEVER GETS TRIGGERED -- IT'LL BE BLAMED ON US!
THUNDERBOLTS -- FAN OUT! WHATEVER YOU DO -- DON'T LET THE LIGHTNING RODS GET NEAR THE --
HAHH!
GOLD WOMAN MAKES MISTAKE -- SKRX -- TURNS HER BACK TO HULK! NOW HULK WILL -- KXX -- SHOW HER --
-- WITH HULK, ONE MISTAKE IS ALL YOU -- ZTK -- GET!
HFF!

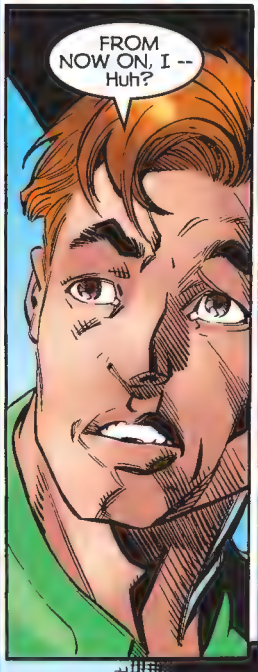

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS. FIGHTING THAT CREATURE, PROTECTING IT --
-- WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, ANYWAY?
IT'S AFTER ENERGY, FLATMAN! WHATEVER IT CAN GET! AND MOONSTONE --
WRAM
"-- MOONSTONE'S PRACTICALLY A LIVING GENERATOR!"
KRAKOOM
IT HAPPENS IN SECONDS.
FIRST, THERE'S A BUILDING WHINE OF UNLEASHED POWER, AS MOONSTONE'S ENERGY IS TORN FROM HER AND ABSORBED INTO THE HULK-CONSTRUCT.
IT DROWNS OUT THE CREATURE'S SAVAGE, EXULTANT LAUGH OF TRIUMPH --
-- AS WELL AS MOONSTONE'S AGONIZED SCREAM OF PAIN.
AND THEN, WITH A FLAT CRUMP OF DISPLACED AIR --
-- THE ROBOT IS GONE --
-- AND IN ITS PLACE --

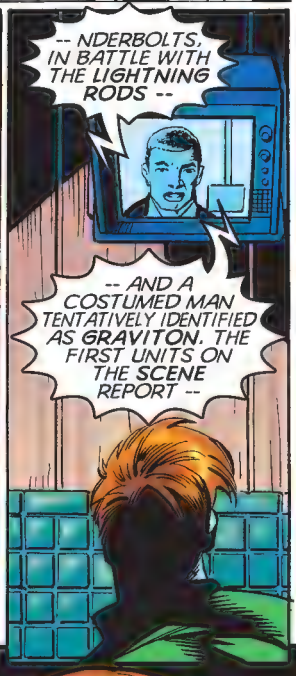
I'M -- I'M BACK!
BY ALL THE BLESSED SAINTS IN HEAVEN --
--I'M BACK!
uh-oh.
WH-WHO --?
THAT'S -- THAT'S GRAVITON!
THE GRAVITON? THAT'S NOT GOOD...
THAT'S VERY MUCH NOT GOOD...
!

MEANWHILE, IN NORTHERN MEXICO...
... IN A CASTLE WE'VE SEEN MANY TIMES BEFORE...
THIS IS RICH INDEED, TECHNO.
WE FOUND GRAVITON -- BUT DUPED THEM INTO BRINGING HIM THROUGH TO EARTH! IF ONLY THIS MINI-CAMERA COULD GLIMPSE THE THUNDERBOLTS --
-- I'D LOVE TO SEE THEIR FACES!
OKAY, FINE -- WE DID GREAT, BARON. GRAVITON'S BACK. WANT TO TELL ME NOW WHAT THE POINT OF THIS WAS?
VERY SIMPLE, TECHNO. IF GRAVITON KILLS THEM, THEY'RE PUNISHED FOR BETRAYING US AND GOING AGAINST MY LEADERSHIP.
IF THEY MANAGE TO ESCAPE, NO ONE WILL BELIEVE THEY WERE INNOCENT DUPES, AND THEIR HOPES OF ACCEPTANCE WILL BE DASHED.
AND WE GET OUR REVENGE THAT WAY, TOO.
OR AT LEAST THE FIRST TASTE OF IT, YES. WIN OR LOSE, THEY ARE WORSE OFF THAN BEFORE -- AND WE ARE THE UNSEEN AUTHORS OF THEIR MISERY.
ONE QUESTION, HOWEVER. WHY DID YOU PROGRAM THE HULK TO TALK IN SO DATED A MANNER?
WELL, YOU WANTED THE HULK-ROBOT IN A HURRY -- AND ALL I HAD TO WORK FROM WAS SOME OLD NEWS FOOTAGE OF OL' --
-- GHAAAKHX!
TZAK
TECHNO! WHAT --?!

HE IS NOT DEAD, ZEMO. I'VE BEEN AVOIDING YOUR SECURITY MEASURES, WATCHING YOU FOR DAYS -- LONG ENOUGH TO LEARN HOW TO HANDLE YOU.
CITIZEN V?!
BUT -- THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!
THAT WAS AN ELECTRONIC SCRAMBLER. IT WILL KEEP HIM FROM INTERFERING FOR HALF AN HOUR OR SO --
-- WHICH SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO DEAL WITH YOU.
FAR FROM IT, CRIMINAL -- AS YOU ARE ABOUT TO LEARN!

AND IN MADISON, WISCONSIN, THE THUNDERBOLTS' MISSING MEMBER, ATLAS, SITS AT THE HOSPITAL BEDSIDE OF HIS BROTHER CARL --
-- HIS BROTHER, WHO DIED FIVE MINUTES AGO --
THEY RECOGNIZED ME, I KNOW. THEY MUST'VE CALLED THE COPS BY NOW. BUT I JUST WANTED TO TELL YOU, CARL --
-- I'M THROUGH RUNNIN'.
I GOT THE FAMILY DESTROYED, I GOT YOU KILLED -- I'VE DONE ENOUGH DAMAGE BY RUNNIN' AWAY.


FROM NOW ON, I --
Huh?


-- NDERBOLTS, IN BATTLE WITH THE LIGHTNING RODS --
-- AND A COSTUMED MAN TENTATIVELY IDENTIFIED AS GRAVITON. THE FIRST UNITS ON THE SCENE REPORT --

THE NEWS GOES ON. AND IT DOESN'T SOUND GOOD, AND ATLAS'S OWN WORDS COME BACK TO HIM --
-- ABOUT THE DAMAGE HE'S DONE BY RUNNING AWAY -- HOW HE'S NOT GOING TO DO THAT ANY MORE --

THRAWK
I'M *BACK*, YOU HEAR ME? AT LONG LAST, I'M BACK ON *EARTH* --
-- AND NO ONE IS GOING TO STOP ME FROM *REVELING* IN IT --
-- LEAST OF ALL A BAND OF *COSTUMED MORONS* I'VE NEVER EVEN *HEARD OF* BEFORE!

KLOPP
I CONTROL GRAVITY, YOU FOOLS --
-- ONE OF THE UNIVERSE'S MOST FUNDAMENTAL FORCES! HOW CAN YOU STAND AGAINST THAT?
YEAH, WELL, I'VE USED GRAVITY A TIME OR TWO MYSELF --
-- AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEARN!
I DIDN'T SAY I USED GRAVITY, YOU GROTESQUE COW --
-- I SAID I CONTROLLED IT!
WHUHH!
I CAN MAKE YOUR FREAKISH BODY AS LIGHT AS A FEATHER -- OR AS HEAVY AS SOLID LEAD! AND MORE -- I CAN MAKE IT FALL --
-- IN ANY DIRECTION I CHOOSE!
THWMP
WHOA! INCOMING!
UHH!
KRAMM
YEAH?
YOU DON'T LOOK SO TOUGH TO ME!
WELL DONE, GIRL. NOT MANY HAVE MANAGED TO SURPRISE ME.
GOOD, 'CAUSE I GOT A DOUBLE HANDFUL OF THAT WITH YOUR NAME ON IT! YOU WANT TO TANGLE WITH ME?
JUST STEP -- RIGHT --

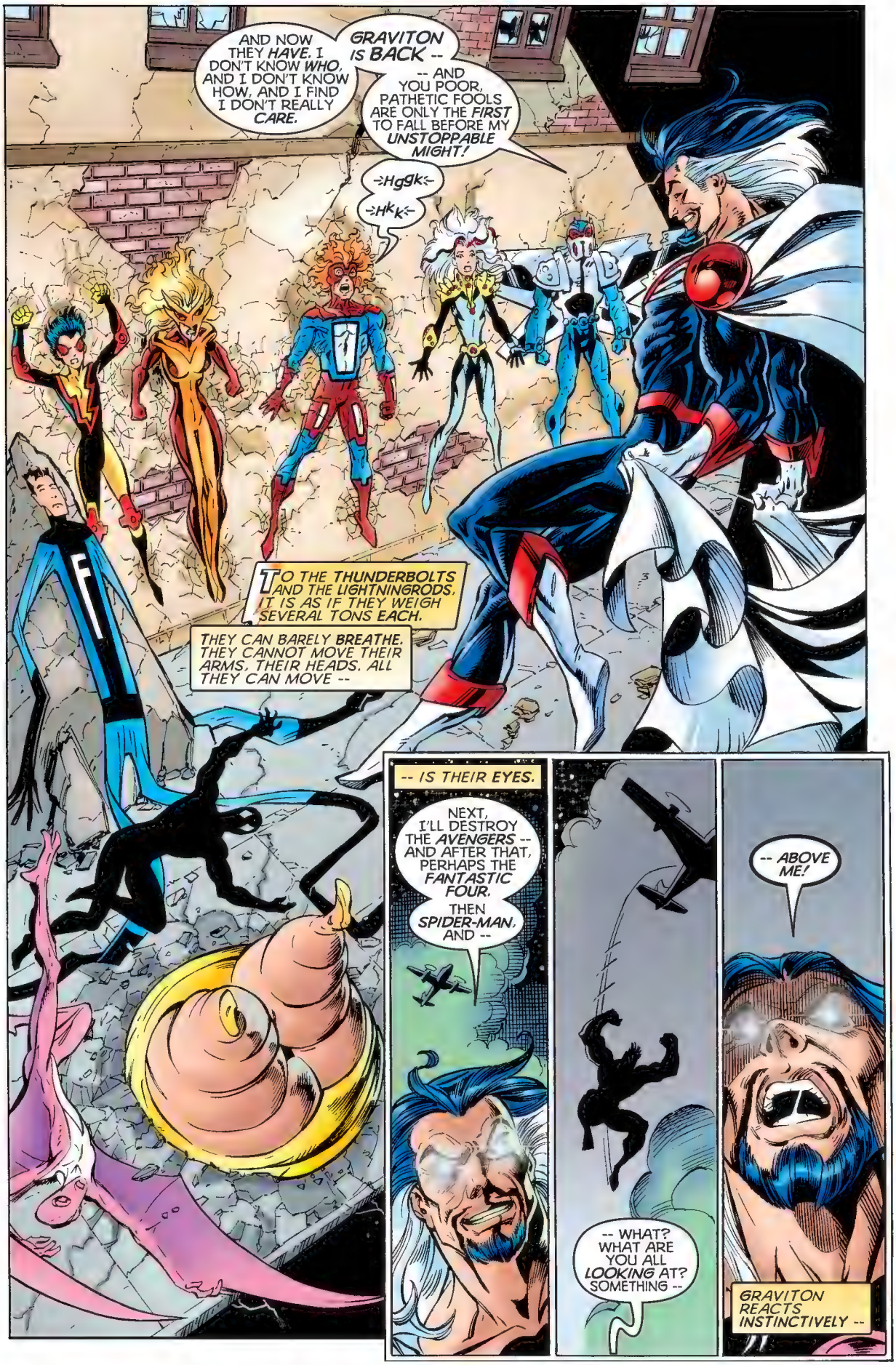
--AHHH!
A SINGLE GESTURE --
-- AND SEVERAL TONS OF CONCRETE AND ROCK HURTLE AT SONGBIRD -- TOO BIG AND TOO FAST TO DODGE --
DON'T WORRY, KID -- I'VE GOT YOU COVERED! HE'S NOT GONNA --
SHRACKAKK
MY -- MY WINGS!
HE'S DAMAGED 'EM!
DAMAGED WINGS OR NOT, IT DOESN'T MATTER. NEITHER OF YOU CAN STAY ALOFT --
-- IF I WILL OTHERWISE!
KRAK
THAT DOES IT, YOU BEARDED WEIRDO! YOU MAY HAVE BEATEN THE OTHERS --
-- BUT HERE'S WHERE Mr. IMMORTAL KICKS YOUR BUTT!
MR.
Oh, REALLY?
SPLTCH

THAT WON'T KILL *Mr. IMMORTAL* -- OR, WELL, IT *WILL*, BUT HE'LL GET BETTER. STILL, HE AND THE OTHERS HAVE KEPT GRAVITON *OCCUPIED* --
-- PREVENTING HIM FROM NOTICING THAT I'VE PHASED UP THROUGH THE GROUND *BEHIND* HIM -- AND CAN NOW --
HONESTLY, WOMAN -- DID YOU REALLY EXPECT YOU COULD SNEAK UP ON SOMEONE WHO CAN SENSE DISRUPTIONS IN THE *GRAVIMETRIC FIELD*?
I -- WHAT --?
AND *INTANGIBILITY* WON'T SAVE YOU, EITHER.
AS LONG AS YOU HAVE MASS -- *ANY* MASS AT ALL, NO MATTER HOW *LITTLE* -- YOU ARE AFFECTED BY *GRAVITY*.
AND THAT MAKES GRAVITON YOUR *MASTER!*
Oh, *YEAH?!*
YOU MAY BE *HOT STUFF*, BUSTER -- BUT YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE THUNDERBOLTS! AND WE DON'T QUIT -- NOT WHILE WE'RE STILL *BREATHING!*
IS *THAT* WHO YOU ARE? VERY WELL, CHILD. MAKE YOUR *MOVE*.
MY *MOVE?* YOU'D BETTER *BELIEVE* I'M GOING TO --
THRAGKK

WELL, NOW. THAT WAS...
...INVIGORATING.
MEXICO...
WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS CHARADE? THE REAL CITIZEN V IS DEAD, AND I KNOW IT -- MY FATHER CHOKED THE LIFE FROM HIM WITH HIS OWN HANDS!
KTENG
TANG
BUT THAT WASN'T ENOUGH FOR YOU, WAS IT?
YOU HAD TO POSE AS HIS DESCENDANT -- AND BESMIRCH HIS NAME WORLDWIDE!
KTANG
AND WHAT OF IT?
I AM THE GRANDSON YOU ONLY CLAIMED TO BE! I AM THE TRUE DESCENDANT OF CITIZEN V --
-- AND I SHALL MAKE YOU PAY FOR YOUR CRIMES AGAINST HIS NAME!
IMPOSSIBLE. THE ORIGINAL CITIZEN V HAD NO OFFSPRING. NO MATTER, THOUGH. I'LL STILL GUT YOU LIKE A TROUT --
-- AND HANG YOUR HEAD FROM THE CASTLE WALLS!
WITH THAT, HELMUT ZEMO THRUSTS --
-- BUT HIS CLOAKED OPPONENT PARRIES EASILY.
YOU CAN TRY.
-- IS ALL HE SAYS.

COTTONWOOD.
IT SEEMS LIKE SO LONG AGO.
I WAS MERELY FRANKLIN HALL -- AN ORDINARY MAN. A HIGH-ENERGY PHYSICIST WORKING ON AN ILL-FATED TELEPORTATION BEAM.
"A POWER-SPIKE CAUSED THE DEVICE TO WORK FOR THE FIRST AND LAST TIME -- SEIZING AN EXPERIMENTAL ANTI-GRAVITY ELEMENT IN A NEARBY LAB --
"-- AND SCRAMBLING MY MOLECULES WITH ITS ENERGIZED ATOMS -- GIVING ME MY ASTONISHING POWERS.
as seen in AVENGERS #158 – Tom.
"BUT WHENEVER I USED THE POWERS, IT SEEMS --
"-- I WAS DRAWN INTO CONFLICT WITH THE WORLD'S SUPER HEROES --
"-- THE AVENGERS, THE THING, SPIDER-MAN AND OTHERS.
"ULTIMATELY, DURING A BATTLE WITH THE AVENGERS, THE ANDRIOD VISION MERGED HIS INTANGIBLE BODY WITH MINE --
"-- AND THEN INCREASED HIS DENSITY, TURNING HIS FORM DIAMOND-HARD --
"-- AND CAUSING MINE TO COLLAPSE IN ON ITSELF, LIKE A STAR COLLAPSING INTO A BLACK HOLE.
"I FELL OUT OF REALITY ENTIRELY --"
In AVENGERS UNPLUGGED #2 – Tom

"AND WHEN I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS --
PTAH?
PTAH.
PTAH PTAH
"-- I WAS IN SOME SORT OF MICRO-DIMENSION --
"-- SURROUNDED BY ALIEN BEINGS SO AMAZED BY MY SUDDEN ARRIVAL --
"-- THAT THEY APPARENTLY VIEWED ME AS SOME KIND OF GOD.
PTAH
PTAH PTAH
PTAH
PTAH PTAH
"I SOON DISCOVERED THAT THE 'PTAH,' AS I CALLED THEM, WERE FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL, AND HAD A MINOR TELEPATHIC ABILITY --
"-- WHICH HELPED ME EAT, TO SECURE NEW CLOTHING, AND SO FORTH.
PTAH
PTAH PTAH
"BUT THE PTAH, FOR ALL THEIR DOG-LIKE OBEDIENCE, WERE OF LIMITED INTELLIGENCE. IT WAS LIKE RULING A PLANET OF COCKER SPANIELS.
"SO I BEGAN TO EXPERIMENT. THE PTAH WOULD BRING ME, OR MANUFACTURE, WHATEVER I COULD IMAGINE --
"-- AND SO ALL OF MY SCIENTIFIC EXPERTISE COULD BE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON THE PROBLEM OF REACHING EARTH.
"UNFORTUNATELY, DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL PROVED BEYOND ME.
"ALL I COULD DO WAS BUILD A BEACON, BROADCASTING ACROSS THE DIMENSIONAL VOID TO ANYONE WHO MIGHT HEAR IT --
"-- HOPING SOMEONE WOULD DISCOVER IT -- SOMEONE WHO COULD BRING ME HOME."


AND NOW THEY *HAVE*. I DON'T KNOW *WHO*, AND I DON'T KNOW HOW, AND I FIND I DON'T REALLY *CARE*.
GRAVITON IS BACK --
-- AND YOU POOR, PATHETIC FOOLS ARE ONLY THE *FIRST* TO FALL BEFORE MY *UNSTOPPABLE MIGHT!*
-:Hggk:-
-:Hkk:-
TO THE THUNDERBOLTS AND THE LIGHTNINGRODS, IT IS AS IF THEY WEIGH SEVERAL TONS EACH.
THEY CAN BARELY **BREATHE**. THEY CANNOT MOVE THEIR ARMS, THEIR HEADS. ALL THEY CAN MOVE --
-- *IS THEIR EYES.*
NEXT, I'LL DESTROY THE *AVENGERS* -- AND AFTER THAT, PERHAPS THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*. THEN *SPIDER-MAN*, AND --
-- WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU ALL *LOOKING* AT? SOMETHING --
-- *ABOVE ME!*
GRAVITON REACTS INSTINCTIVELY --

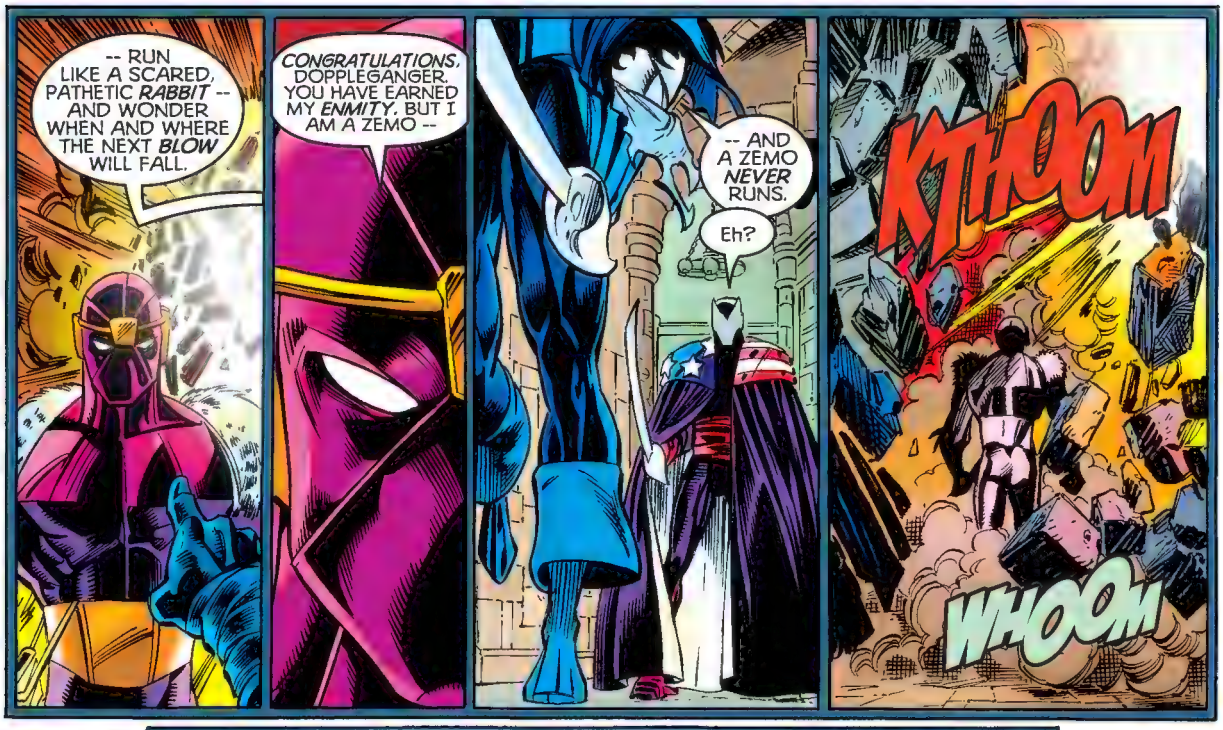
-- LASHING OUT WITH A PLUS-GRAVITY WAVE THAT INCREASES THE EFFECT OF GRAVITY ON HIS ASSAILANT TENFOLD.
UNFORTUNATELY, HIS ATTACKER WAS ALREADY FALLING DIRECTLY TOWARD HIM, AND THE RESULT --
-- IS ANYTHING BUT WHAT GRAVITON HAD INTENDED.
YOU THOUGHT YOU'D BEATEN US ALL, DIDN'T YOU? BUT I'M BACK!
HIS CONCENTRATION DISRUPTED, THE GRAVITY WALL PINIONING THE OTHERS VANISHES.
KRAM
AND I'M NOT GOING TO DESERT MY TEAM -- NOT GOING TO FAIL MY FRIENDS WHEN THEY NEED ME! NOT AGAIN!
NEVER AGAIN!
UNFORTUNATELY FOR ATLAS --
WHOM
-- EVEN UNDER HIS BARRAGE, ALL GRAVITON NEEDS --
WHAMM
-- IS A MOMENT'S THOUGHT.

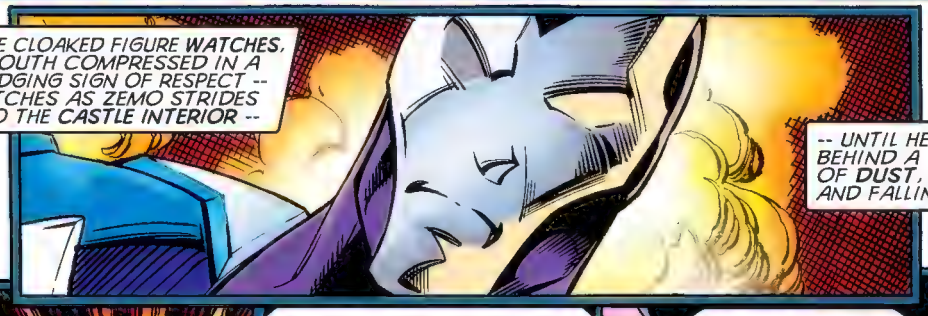
BY HEAVEN -- THIS IS *INTOLERABLE!* YOU THINK YOU'VE GAINED AN *ADVANTAGE* --
-- BUT YOU *HAVEN'T! YOU HAVEN'T!*
I'LL DEFEAT YOU *AGAIN,* AS EASILY AS I DID *BEFORE!* I'LL CRUSH YOU ALL -- *KILL* YOU ALL --
AND *THEN* WHAT?
Wh--?
WHAT DO YOU *MEAN?*
YOU CAN DEFEAT US -- EVEN *KILL* US. I DON'T *DOUBT* IT. BUT THERE'LL BE OTHERS -- YOU *KNOW* THAT.
LET'S SAY YOU KILL THE *AVENGERS,* EVEN THE *FANTASTIC FOUR* AND *SPIDER-MAN.* WHAT THEN?
THEN YOU'LL FACE THE *X-MEN. S.H.I.E.L.D.* THE *CHAMPIONS.* THE *DEFENDERS.*
BUT THE CHAMPIONS AND THE DEFENDERS DON'T --
Shh!
YOU'VE GOT THE *POWER,* GRAVITON. YOU'VE GOT THE *AMBITION.*
BUT YOU'VE GOT NO *VISION!*
MOONSTONE, WHAT ARE YOU --
JOLT, I SAID *Shhh!*
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT TO *DO* WITH YOUR POWER, BEYOND BEATING ALL COMERS AND *LORDING* IT OVER THEM.
AND UNTIL YOU DO -- UNTIL YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO *USE* THAT GREAT POWER FOR, YOU'LL *ALWAYS* LOSE IN THE END --

-- BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU REALLY WANT.
WHY, YOU --
-- YOU --
YOU...ARE RIGHT, WOMAN. I WILL THINK ON THIS -- WORK OUT WHAT IT IS THAT I WANT, AND HOW TO GET IT.
AND THEN I'LL BE BACK. BELIEVE ME --
-- I WILL BE BACK!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW --
"-- IT WORKED!"
WAY TO COME ON LIKE THE CAVALRY, ATLAS! I THOUGHT WE WERE GONERS FOR SURE, BUT YOU -- YOU WERE AMAZING!
THANKS, ABE.
Oh, ERIK -- IT'S SO GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK!
IT'S GOOD TO -- TO BE BACK, TOO. GOOD TO BELONG SOMEWHERE -- INSTEAD O' JUST BEIN' SOMEWHERE.
WHATEVER, BIG GUY!
-- YOU THINKING, MOONSTONE? YOU DIDN'T SOLVE ANYTHING, YOU JUST PUT IT OFF -- AND ONCE GRAVITON COMES BACK, HE'LL BE WORSE THAN EVER!
THIS IS JUST LIKE WHAT HAPPENED IN KOSMOS --
In #13-14 -- Tom.
-- GETTING US BACK TO EARTH AT THE COST OF TURNING KOSMOS INTO A WARLIKE, PARANOID PLACE --
-- DETERMINED TO CONQUER HUMANITY!

I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT HAPPENED ON KOSMOS, JOLT -- AS ABE AND SONGBIRD TOLD YOU.
BUT GRAVITON --
GRAVITON COULD HAVE A CORONARY EMBOLISM AND DIE TOMORROW. OR HE COULD DECIDE HIS GREATEST DESIRE --
-- IS TO OWN A FULL SET OF 1957 FLEER ROOKIE CARDS. EITHER WAY, HE'S GONE AND NO ONE DIED. WE'LL WORRY ABOUT HIM IF HE COMES BACK.
AND NOW --
-- ARE YOU AND YOUR TEAM GOING TO TRY AND TAKE US IN, Mr. IMMORTAL? OR DOES SAVING THIS TOWN BUY US SOME GETAWAY TIME?
Ah, WELL --
-- IT MIGHT BE DIFFERENT IF THE 'RODS WERE IN BETTER SHAPE --
-- BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES --
"-- I GUESS I'VE GOT NO CHOICE."
THAT CERTAINLY DIDN'T GO THE WAY I'D HOPED. BUT I THINK WE'D ALL AGREE -- EVEN JOLT --
-- IT WAS A START.
I'M STANDING IN THE RUINS OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE TOWN CENTER OF COTTONWOOD -- BEFORE THE THUNDERBOLTS MADE IT A WAR ZONE.
WE MAY NEVER KNOW WHETHER THE HULK ROBOT THAT MENACED THE TOWN WAS A CON GAME GONE WRONG -- OR HOW GRAVITON CAME TO BE HERE.
BUT WE DO KNOW ONE THING.
FIVE WANTED CRIMINALS CAME TO THIS TINY TOWN TODAY --
-- AND THEY GOT AWAY CLEAN.

AND, IN MEXICO...
YOU APPEAR TO BE GROWING *TIRED*, ZEMO.
TANG
KTENG
AS DO *YOU*, DOPPELGANGER.
I MUST COMPLIMENT YOU -- YOU ARE *SKILLED* WITH THE SWORD. BUT YOU ARE LIKE A NEWCOMER, DEPENDING ON *TALENT* OVER EXPERIENCE --
-- AND IN THE END, IT IS *EXPERIENCE* THAT WILL TRIUMPH!
KROOM
Eh?
YOU WERE *SAYING*, ZEMO?
WHAT -- WHAT IS *HAPPENING?*
I SAID I HAVE BEEN ELUDING YOUR SECURITY FOR *DAYS* -- BUT YOU DIDN'T EVEN *CONSIDER* WHAT THAT MIGHT MEAN, DID YOU?
I HAVE MINED YOUR ENTIRE CASTLE WITH *EXPLOSIVES* -- AND OUR BATTLE WAS MERELY A WAY TO BE FACE TO FACE WITH YOU --
-- WHEN YOU REALIZED THAT YOU'D BEEN *OUT-MANEUVERED*.
I AM GOING TO TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING YOU *HAVE*, ZEMO -- JUST AS YOU TOOK MY GRANDFATHER'S *HONOR*. AND IT ALL STARTS *HERE*.
SO RUN, ZEMO --


-- RUN LIKE A SCARED, PATHETIC RABBIT -- AND WONDER WHEN AND WHERE THE NEXT BLOW WILL FALL.
CONGRATULATIONS, DOPPLEGANGER. YOU HAVE EARNED MY ENMITY. BUT I AM A ZEMO --
-- AND A ZEMO NEVER RUNS.
Eh?
KTHOOM
WHOOM


THE CLOAKED FIGURE WATCHES, MOUTH COMPRESSED IN A GRUDGING SIGN OF RESPECT -- WATCHES AS ZEMO STRIDES INTO THE CASTLE INTERIOR --
-- UNTIL HE VANISHES BEHIND A CURTAIN OF DUST, SMOKE AND FALLING RUBBLE.

SOON, OUTSIDE...
WHOOM
HE WOULDN'T HAVE WILLINGLY GONE TO HIS DEATH. HE MUST HAVE HAD ESCAPE TUNNELS -- SOME WAY TO ENSURE HIS SURVIVAL.
STILL, THIS WAS JUST THE FIRST STEP. ZEMO WILL BE HUMILIATED AND DESTROYED FOR WHAT HE'S DONE. HE WILL --
-- AND SO WILL THE THUNDERBOLTS --!
NEXT:
DID SOMEBODY SAY... THE MASTERS OF EVIL?!

MARVEL COMICS
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
SEP
#18
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BUSIEK
BAGLEY
HANNA

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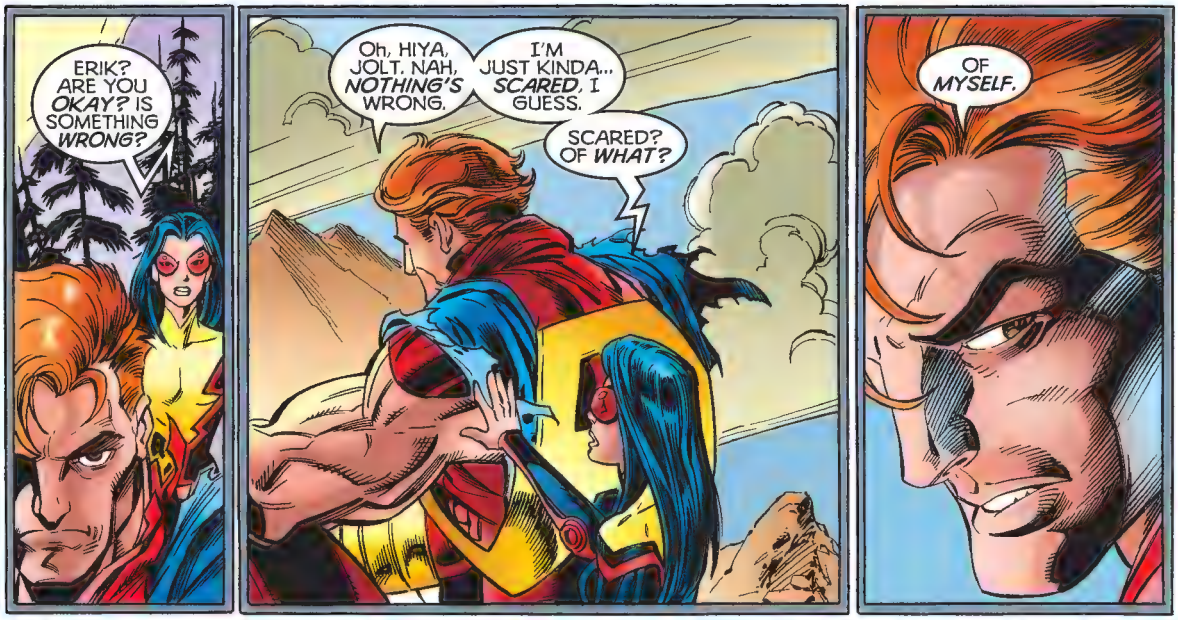
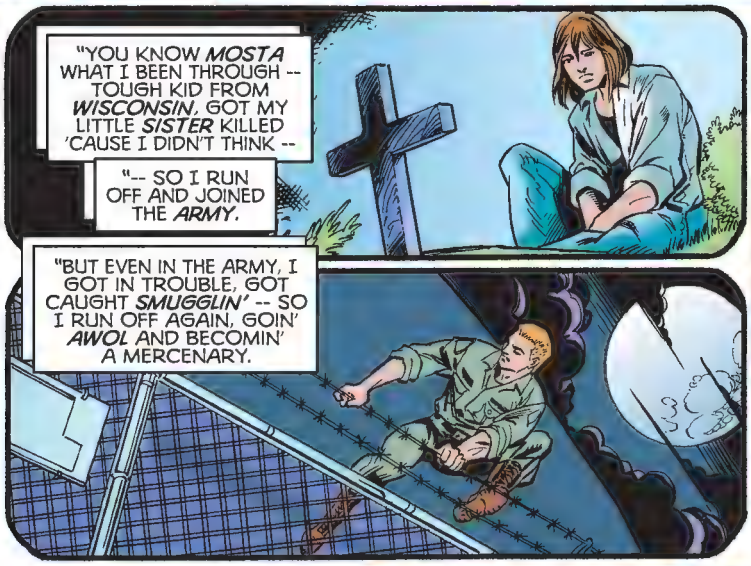
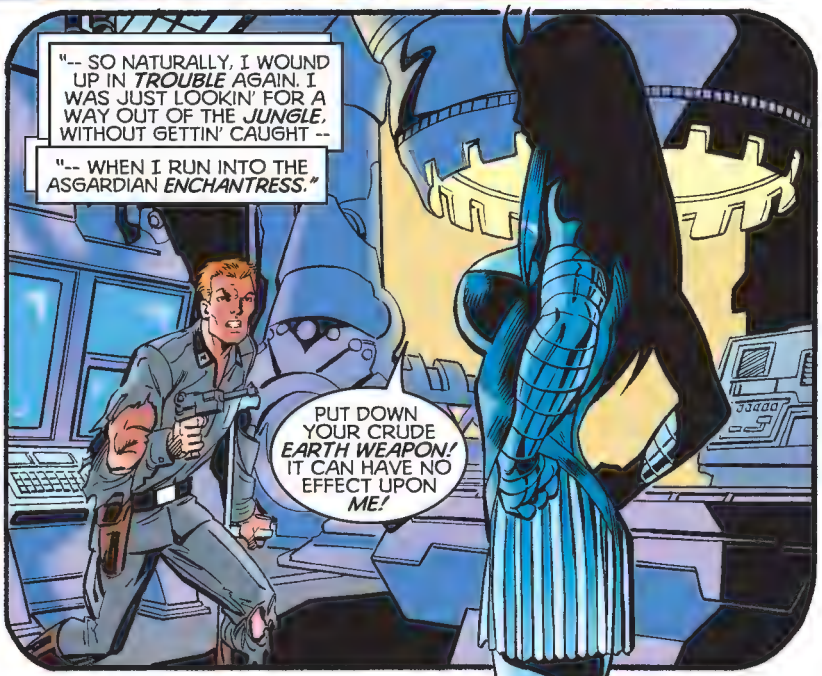

ERIK? ARE YOU *OKAY?* IS SOMETHING *WRONG?*
Oh, HIYA, JOLT. NAH, *NOTHING'S* WRONG.
I'M JUST KINDA... *SCARED*, I GUESS.
SCARED? OF *WHAT?*
OF *MYSELF.*


"YOU KNOW *MOSTA* WHAT I BEEN THROUGH -- TOUGH KID FROM *WISCONSIN*. GOT MY LITTLE *SISTER* KILLED 'CAUSE I DIDN'T THINK --
"-- SO I RUN OFF AND JOINED THE *ARMY*.
"BUT EVEN IN THE ARMY, I GOT IN TROUBLE, GOT CAUGHT *SMUGGLIN'* -- SO I RUN OFF AGAIN, GOIN' *AWOL* AND BECOMIN' A MERCENARY.

"I WOUND UP WORKIN' FOR *BARON ZEMO* -- *HEINRICH* ZEMO, THAT IS -- AN' THAT WORKED OUT OKAY. I HAD SOMEONE TO *THINK* FOR ME --
"-- AN' THE PENALTY FOR GETTIN' OUTTA LINE WAS *DEATH*. SO I DIDN'T.

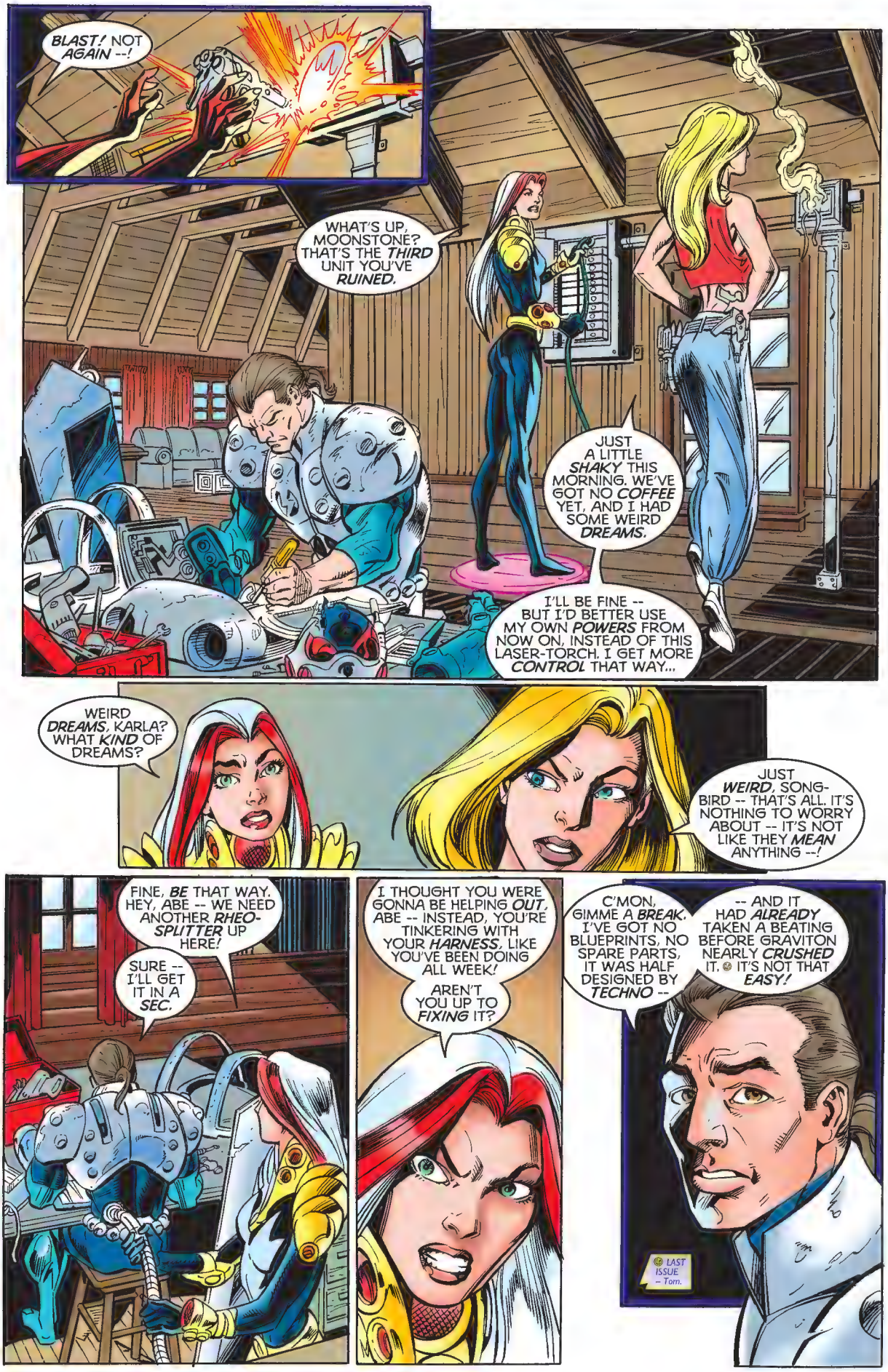
"BUT THEN ZEMO *DIED*, AND I HAD TA THINK FOR *MYSELF* AGAIN --

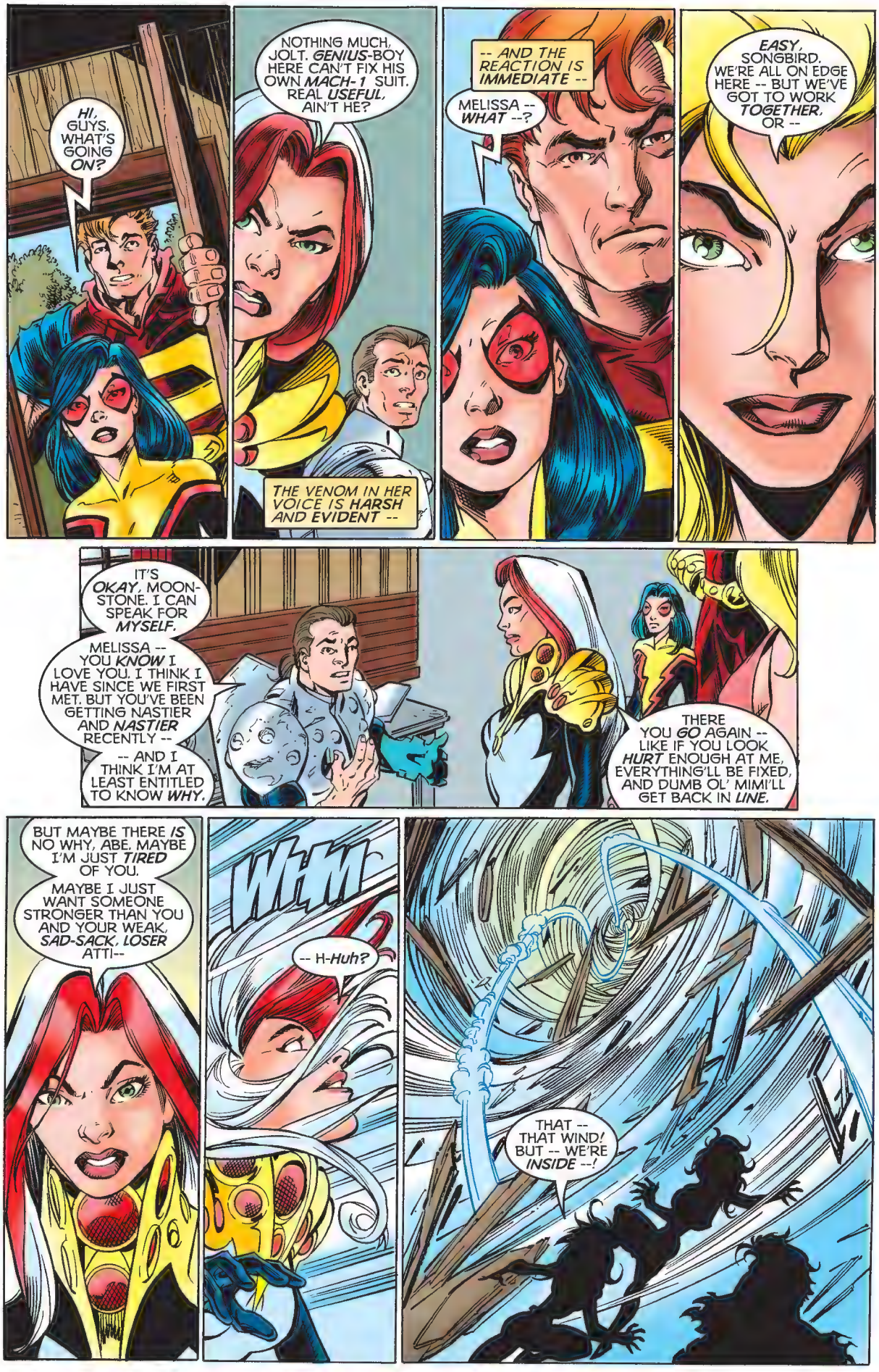

"-- SO NATURALLY, I WOUND UP IN *TROUBLE* AGAIN. I WAS JUST LOOKIN' FOR A WAY OUT OF THE *JUNGLE*, WITHOUT GETTIN' CAUGHT --
"-- WHEN I RUN INTO THE ASGARDIAN *ENCHANTRESS.*"
PUT DOWN YOUR CRUDE *EARTH WEAPON!* IT CAN HAVE NO EFFECT UPON *ME!*

"SHE USED ZEMO'S *MACHINES* ON ME -- CHARGED ME WITH IONIC ENERGY, MAKIN' ME *POWER MAN!*"
TELL ME, DO YOU HATE THE *AVENGERS* AS MUCH AS I DO?
WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT, I'D HATE *MYSELF* IF YOU WANTED ME TO!
"I MADE IT OUTTA THE *JUNGLE*, ALL RIGHT --
"-- AN' I ALSO GOT SOMEONE ELSE TO *THINK* FOR ME. I BECAME A SUPER-VILLAIN, WINNIN' MYSELF A *REP* --
"-- A REP THAT, AS IT TURNED OUT, PRETTY MUCH DESTROYED MY *FAMILY*.
"BUT I DIDN'T *KNOW* THAT. WHEN THE ENCHANTRESS *DITCHED* ME, I FOUND NEW BOSSES -- THE *MANDARIN*, THE *GRIM REAPER*, COUNT *NEFARIA* --
"-- AN' I DID WHATEVER THEY *ASKED*.
"AN' THEN NEFARIA *SUCKERED* ME AN' A COUPLE OTHERS -- DRAINED AWAY MY POWER FOR *HIMSELF*.
"I SHOULDA *THANKED* HIM, SHOULDA GONE STRAIGHT, GLAD TO BE *HUMAN* AGAIN --
"-- BUT BY THIS TIME I WASN'T *THINKIN'* TOO STRAIGHT, EVEN FOR ME.
"I WAS OBSESSED WITH GETTIN' MY *POWER* BACK --
"-- AN' SURE ENOUGH, I FOUND A GUY COULD *DO* IT, AN' HE TURNED ME INTA *GOLIATH*.
"I WENT COMPLETELY *BERSERK* --
"-- FIGHTIN' *IRON MAN*, *WONDER MAN*, THE *AVENGERS* -- JUST A TOTAL RAVIN' *WACKO*, BARELY THINKIN' AT ALL."
I WAS STILL NUTS WHEN I GOT INVOLVED WITH THE *KOSMONIANS* -- AN' ALL THAT GOT ME WAS DUPED, USED AN' *TORTURED* --
-- 'TILL I WAS RESCUED BY BARON ZEMO -- *HELMUT*, THIS TIME -- AND PUT ON THE THUNDERBOLTS.

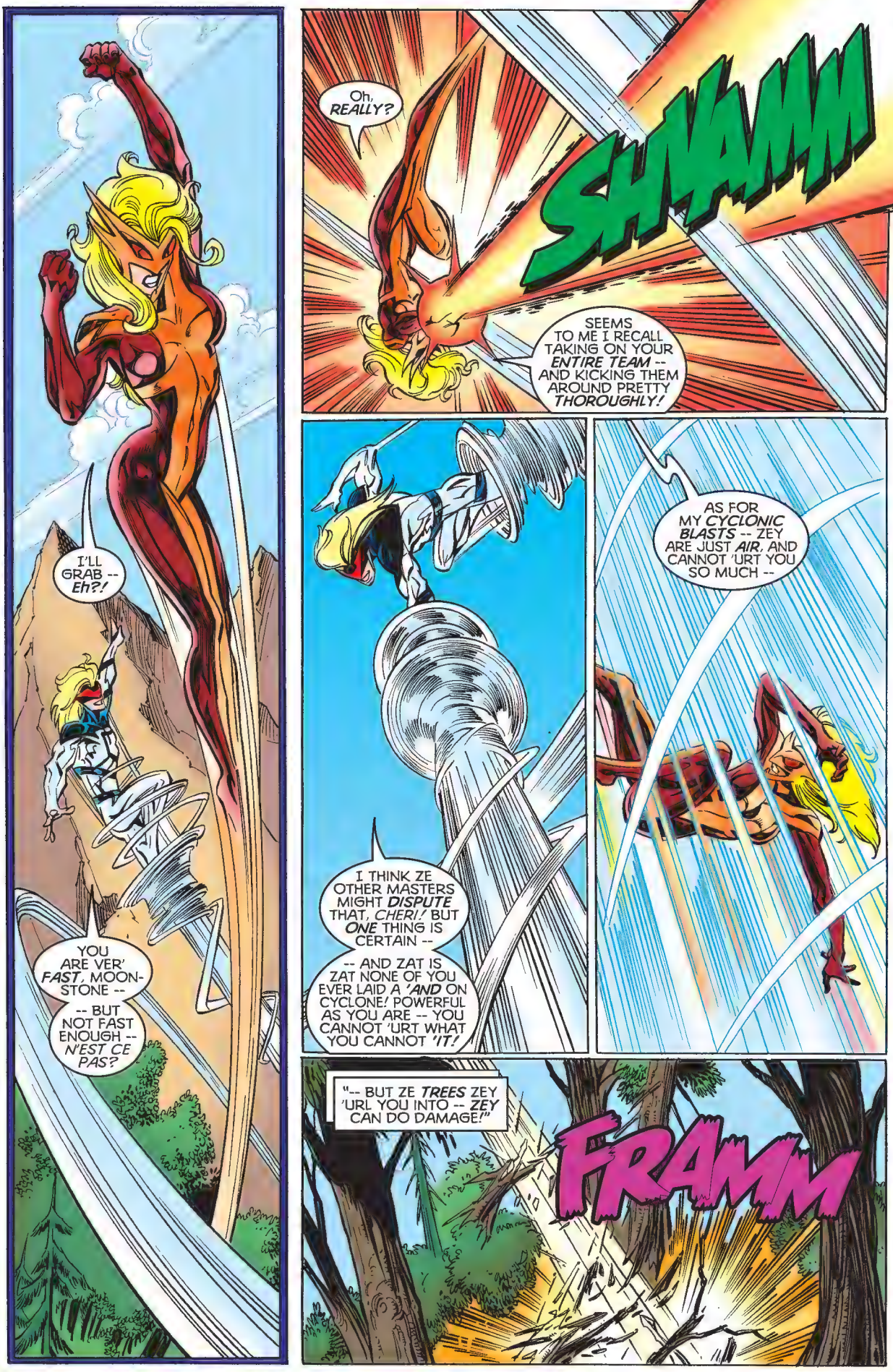
"SO I HAD SOMEONE TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO AGAIN -- SOMEONE I OWED MY LIFE TO --
"-- AN' WHAT KINDA GRATITUDE DID I SHOW?
"I BETRAYED HIM -- SAND-BAGGED HIM FROM BEHIND."
WELL, HE WAS ABOUT TO KILL ME. YOU SAVED MY LIFE.
YEAH, YEAH, AN' I'D DO IT AGAIN. BUT THAT AIN'T THE POINT.
ATLAS CLEARS HIS THROAT, AND REMEMBERS SAVING ZEMO, WHEN THE THUNDERBOLTS WERE FIGHTING TO TAKE HIM DOWN --
-- BUT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT IT.
"THE POINT IS, I BETRAYED SOMEONE I OWED -- LIKE I'D BEEN DOIN' ALL ALONG. MY FOLKS DIED IN DISGRACE THANKS TO ME, AN' MY BROTHER --
"-- MY BROTHER DIED RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.
"I SWORE, RIGHT THEN AN' THERE, THAT WAS GONNA BE THE LAST TIME. AN' I CAME BACK, AND HELPED YOU GUYS AGAINST GRAVITON --"
AND I'M NOT GOING TO DESERT MY TEAM -- NOT GOING TO FAIL MY FRIENDS WHEN THEY NEED ME! NOT AGAIN!
NEVER AGAIN!
WHOM
BUT WHEN I WAS POUNDIN' ON GRAVITON, I FELT IT AGAIN -- THAT SAME KINDA THRILL, THE RUSH I USED TO GET FROM FIGHTIN' WHEN I WAS CRAZY.
I GOTTA FACE FACTS, KID. FOR ALL MY POWER, I'M WEAK -- WEAK-WILLED, WEAK-MINDED -- AN' THE REST OF YOU GUYS --

-- YOU PROBABLY SHOULDN'T TRUST ME.
I DUNNO, ATLAS. MY MOM USED TO TELL ME THAT ANY PROBLEM'S HALF LICKED IF YOU FIGURE OUT WHY IT'S HAPPENING.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SCARED OF, ERIK -- YOU CAN GUARD AGAINST IT -- FIGHT IT.
AND YOU'RE TAKING STEPS TO CHANGE YOUR LIFE. WE ALL ARE. MAYBE YOU GUYS WERE ALL VILLAINS -- AND I'M SOME SORT OF ACCESSORY --
-- BUT WE'RE MAKING OUR OWN CHOICES -- WE'RE GOING TO WIN BACK THE PUBLIC'S TRUST, PROVE WE CAN BE HEROES.
AND OKAY, SO MAYBE WE'RE NOT STARTING OUT WITH MUCH --
-- A BEAT-UP OLD CABIN MELISSA OWNS UNDER A PHONY NAME, THAT SHE USED TO USE AS A HIDEOUT --
-- BUT IT'S A PLACE THAT LETS US STOP RUNNING. THAT LETS US TURN AROUND AND MAKE A STAND.
YEAH, YEAH -- BUT WHAT IF I JUST AIN'T GOOD ENOUGH -- OR IF I END UP GOIN' CRAZY AGAIN, AND TURNIN' ON YOU?
I BELIEVE IN YOU. EVEN IF YOU DON'T.
YOU WON'T.
LOOK, ERIK, I'M JUST A DUMB KID -- BUT I'D TRUST YOU WITH MY LIFE, I DID IT BEFORE, AFTER ALL -- AND YOU CAME THROUGH. I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT.
NOW COME ON -- THE OTHERS ARE WORKING ON INSTALLING THE SECURITY SYSTEM ABE DESIGNED --
-- LET'S GO BACK AND PITCH IN.


BLAST! NOT AGAIN --!
WHAT'S UP, MOONSTONE? THAT'S THE THIRD UNIT YOU'VE RUINED.
JUST A LITTLE SHAKY THIS MORNING. WE'VE GOT NO COFFEE YET, AND I HAD SOME WEIRD DREAMS.
I'LL BE FINE -- BUT I'D BETTER USE MY OWN POWERS FROM NOW ON, INSTEAD OF THIS LASER-TORCH. I GET MORE CONTROL THAT WAY...
WEIRD DREAMS, KARLA? WHAT KIND OF DREAMS?
JUST WEIRD, SONG-BIRD -- THAT'S ALL. IT'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT -- IT'S NOT LIKE THEY MEAN ANYTHING --!
FINE, BE THAT WAY. HEY, ABE -- WE NEED ANOTHER RHEO-SPLITTER UP HERE!
SURE -- I'LL GET IT IN A SEC.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE GONNA BE HELPING OUT, ABE -- INSTEAD, YOU'RE TINKERING WITH YOUR HARNESS, LIKE YOU'VE BEEN DOING ALL WEEK!
AREN'T YOU UP TO FIXING IT?
C'MON, GIMME A BREAK. I'VE GOT NO BLUEPRINTS, NO SPARE PARTS, IT WAS HALF DESIGNED BY TECHNO --
-- AND IT HAD ALREADY TAKEN A BEATING BEFORE GRAVITON NEARLY CRUSHED IT. IT'S NOT THAT EASY!
LAST ISSUE -- Tom.


HI, GUYS. WHAT'S GOING ON?
NOTHING MUCH, JOLT. GENIUS-BOY HERE CAN'T FIX HIS OWN MACH-1 SUIT. REAL USEFUL, AIN'T HE?
THE VENOM IN HER VOICE IS HARSH AND EVIDENT --
-- AND THE REACTION IS IMMEDIATE --
MELISSA -- WHAT --?
EASY, SONGBIRD. WE'RE ALL ON EDGE HERE -- BUT WE'VE GOT TO WORK TOGETHER, OR --
IT'S OKAY, MOON-STONE. I CAN SPEAK FOR MYSELF.
MELISSA -- YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU. I THINK I HAVE SINCE WE FIRST MET. BUT YOU'VE BEEN GETTING NASTIER AND NASTIER RECENTLY --
-- AND I THINK I'M AT LEAST ENTITLED TO KNOW WHY.
THERE YOU GO AGAIN -- LIKE IF YOU LOOK HURT ENOUGH AT ME, EVERYTHING'LL BE FIXED, AND DUMB OL' MIMI'LL GET BACK IN LINE.
BUT MAYBE THERE IS NO WHY, ABE. MAYBE I'M JUST TIRED OF YOU.
MAYBE I JUST WANT SOMEONE STRONGER THAN YOU AND YOUR WEAK, SAD-SACK, LOSER ATTI--
WHM
-- H-Huh?
THAT -- THAT WIND! BUT -- WE'RE INSIDE --!

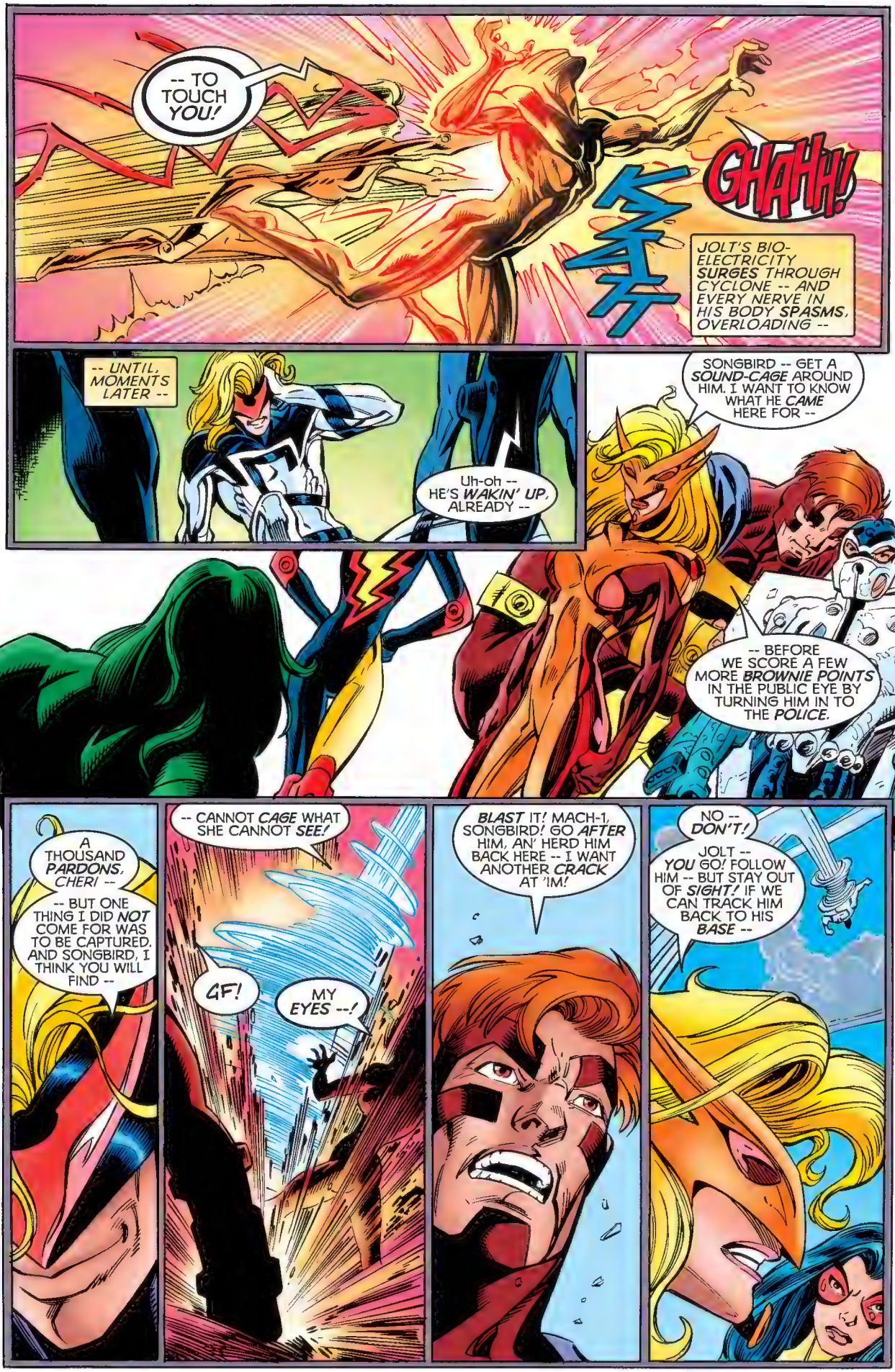
NOT...ANY MORE...
WHO --?
BONJOUR, MES AMIS!
YOU MUS' REMEMBER ME, I AM SURE! I AM CYCLONE, OF ZE MASTERS OF EVIL --
-- AND I 'OPE I AM NOT INTRUDING, BUT I JUS' HAD TO DROP BY WIZ ZIS 'OUSEWARMING MESSAGE!
YOU STINK, THUNDERBOLTS! FIRST, YOU ARE ZE Oh-SO-BOLD CRIMINALS WHO POSE AS HEROES, BUT DESTROY YOUR OWN MASTER PLAN --
-- AND ZEN YOU THINK YOU CAN FOOL ZE WORLD INTO THINKING YOU ARE 'EROES A SECOND TIME! BUT ZAT IS NOT ZE WORST OF IT, NO!
ZE WORST IS ZAT YOU ARE DUMB, YOU ARE UGLY AND YOU 'AVE BODY ODOR ZAT COULD KILL ZE UNWARY!
FOR A MOMENT, THE THUNDERBOLTS STAND MOTIONLESS, IN SLACK-JAWED SILENCE. AND THEN --
HE CAN'T SAY THAT ABOUT US!
SURE HE CAN, KIDDO -- BUT ONLY ONCE!
HARD TO TALK AFTER THAT -- WITH MY FIST DOWN HIS THROAT!
ENOUGH REPARTEE, YOU TWO! THUNDERBOLTS -- GET HIM!
© CYCLONE'S GROUPING OF THE MASTERS WAS LAST SEEN IN #4 – Tom.

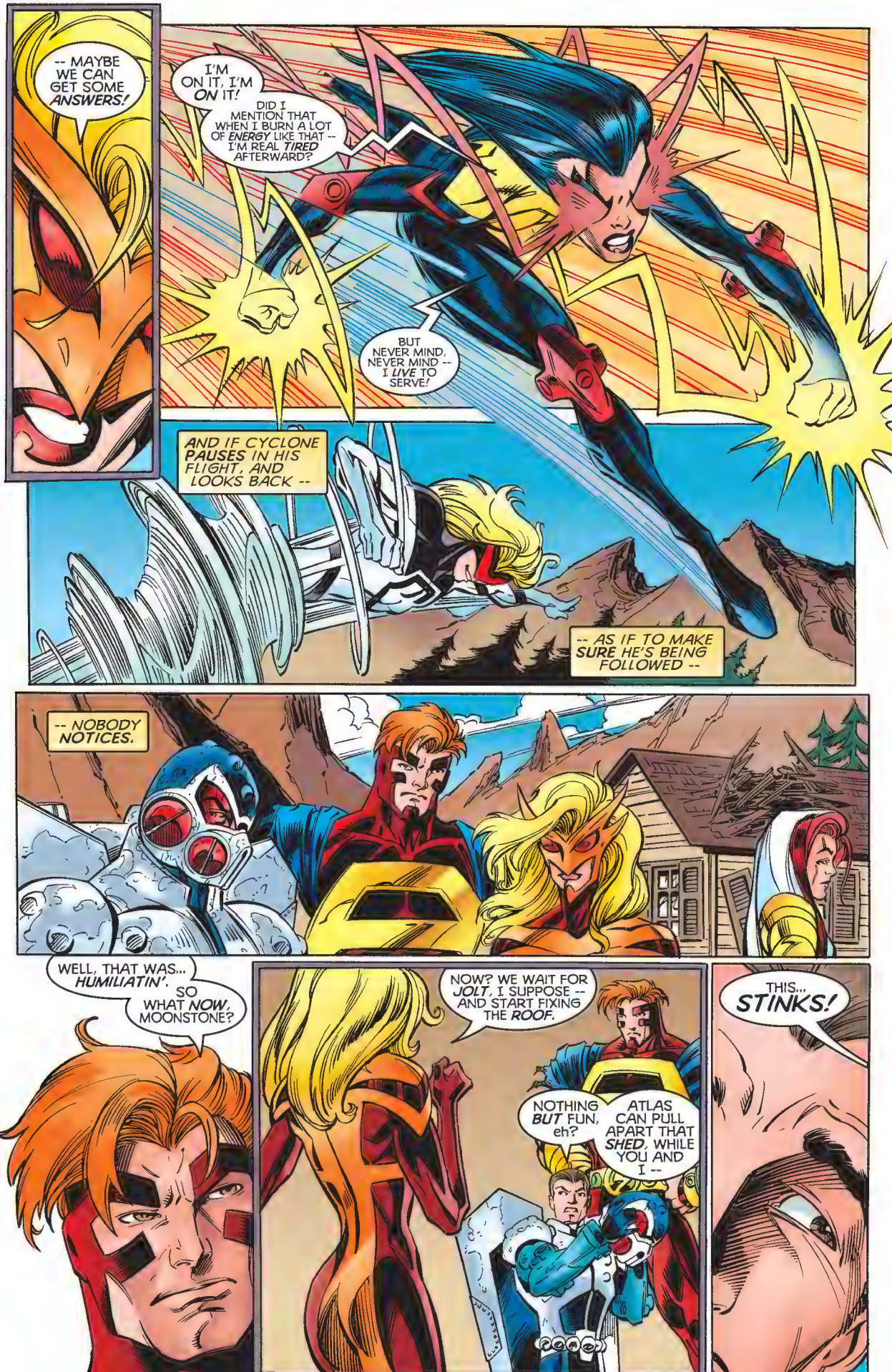

I'LL GRAB -- Eh?!
YOU ARE VER' FAST, MOON-STONE --
-- BUT NOT FAST ENOUGH -- N'EST CE PAS?
Oh, REALLY?
SHNAMM
SEEMS TO ME I RECALL TAKING ON YOUR ENTIRE TEAM -- AND KICKING THEM AROUND PRETTY THOROUGHLY!
I THINK ZE OTHER MASTERS MIGHT DISPUTE THAT, CHERI! BUT ONE THING IS CERTAIN --
-- AND ZAT IS ZAT NONE OF YOU EVER LAID A 'AND ON CYCLONE! POWERFUL AS YOU ARE -- YOU CANNOT 'URT WHAT YOU CANNOT 'IT!
AS FOR MY CYCLONIC BLASTS -- ZEY ARE JUST AIR, AND CANNOT 'URT YOU SO MUCH --
"-- BUT ZE TREES ZEY 'URL YOU INTO -- ZEY CAN DO DAMAGE!"
FRAMM

Ahh -- ZE SOLID-SOUND ATTACKS, JUS' LIKE MY TEAMMATE KLAW'S!
ZEY ARE DODGED NO LESS EASILY!
MAYBE SO, PAL --
-- BUT LET'S SEE YOU DODGE THIS!
IF YOU INSIST --!
AND NOW, MA PETITE SONGBIRD -- CEASE YOUR SCREAMING! LIPS AS LOVELY AS YOURS --
Mf?
-- ZEY SHOULD BE USED FOR MORE GENTLE PURSUITS!
Mmf!
MELISSA!
YOU DIRTY CREEP --!
OKAY, MAYBE YOU CAN DODGE US, LIKE THE COWARD YOU ARE! BUT LET'S SEE YOU DODGE --

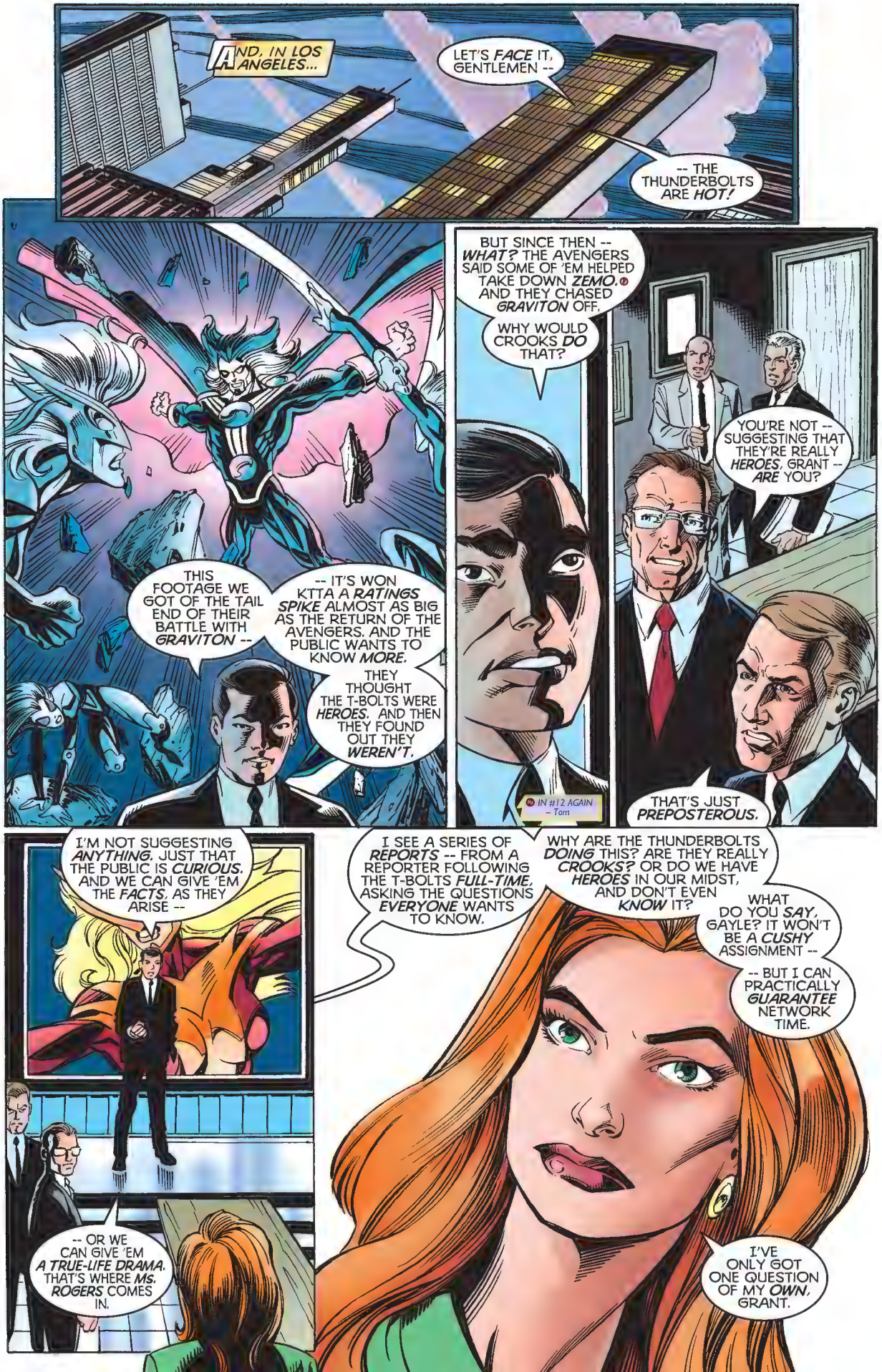
"-- A COUPLE OF TARGET-LOCKED CAMERA-GUIDED MISSILES!"
ABE -- NO! HIS SPEED --!
MA FOI! I AM IN TROUBLE NOW, AND ZERE IS NO MISTAKE ABOUT IT!
-- CYCLONE'S MANEUVERABILITY?
Uh-Oh!
OR...IZ ZERE?
Huh? WHAT'RE YOU --?
ZE SPEED OF CYCLONE IZ MOST IMPRESSIVE, AMERICAN -- BUT IT IZ NOT ALL THERE IS! CAN ZE SO-SOPHISTICATED MISSILES MATCH --
KRO OM
IT'S A LONG FALL -- AND THE ROCKS AT THE BOTTOM ARE JAGGED AND UGLY. IF ATLAS COULD GROW LARGE ENOUGH, HIS SKIN WOULD GET TOUGHER --
-- MORE THAN TOUGH TO SAVE HIM. BUT HE'S DAZED, GROGGY -- AND CAN'T CONCENTRATE --
ATLAS!
ATLAS, SNAP OUT OF IT! I'VE GOT YOU -- BUT IF YOU DON'T STOP FLAILING AROUND --!
H-Huh?

ABE, YOU *MORON!* YOU SHOULD HAVE *KNOWN* HE'D DO SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
I -- I DIDN'T *THINK* --
-- I WAS JUST SO *MAD* AT HIM --!
Ahh, ZIS IS ZE *LIFE!*
IT WAS MY LUCKY DAY *INDEED* -- WHEN FRANCE'S TOP CRIME FAMILY REBUILT ZE *ORIGINAL* CYCLONE'S SUIT FROM HIS *DESIGNS* --
-- AND BESTOWED IT ON *ME!*
AND TO THINK, ZEY THOUGHT I WOULD *SERVE* ZEM! BUT ZEY LEARNED, AS EVERYONE DOES -- ZAT *NO ONE* CAN HOLD A --
-- eh?
NO ONE CAN *TOUCH* YOU, Huh?
MISTER, I'VE TAGGED QUICKSILVER -- TWICE! AND SURE, MAYBE HE WASN'T IN TOP FORM AT THE TIME --
-- BUT I LEARNED *SOMETHING* FROM THAT!
OUAH!
IN #12 – Tom.
IF I CONCENTRATE -- REALLY *POUR ON* THE ENERGY -- I CAN MOVE *FASTER!*
FASTER THAN I'VE EVER GONE *BEFORE!*
AND CY-*CLOWN* -- THAT'S *MORE* THAN FAST ENOUGH --
ZUT ALORS --!


-- TO TOUCH YOU!
KZAT
GHAHH!
JOLT'S BIO-ELECTRICITY SURGES THROUGH CYCLONE -- AND EVERY NERVE IN HIS BODY SPASMS, OVERLOADING --
-- UNTIL, MOMENTS LATER --
Uh-oh -- HE'S WAKIN' UP, ALREADY --
SONGBIRD -- GET A SOUND-CAGE AROUND HIM. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE CAME HERE FOR --
-- BEFORE WE SCORE A FEW MORE BROWNIE POINTS IN THE PUBLIC EYE BY TURNING HIM IN TO THE POLICE.
A THOUSAND PARDONS, CHERI --
-- BUT ONE THING I DID NOT COME FOR WAS TO BE CAPTURED, AND SONGBIRD, I THINK YOU WILL FIND --
-- CANNOT CAGE WHAT SHE CANNOT SEE!
GF!
MY EYES --!
BLAST IT! MACH-1, SONGBIRD! GO AFTER HIM, AN' HERD HIM BACK HERE -- I WANT ANOTHER CRACK AT 'IM!
NO -- DON'T!
JOLT -- YOU GO! FOLLOW HIM -- BUT STAY OUT OF SIGHT! IF WE CAN TRACK HIM BACK TO HIS BASE --

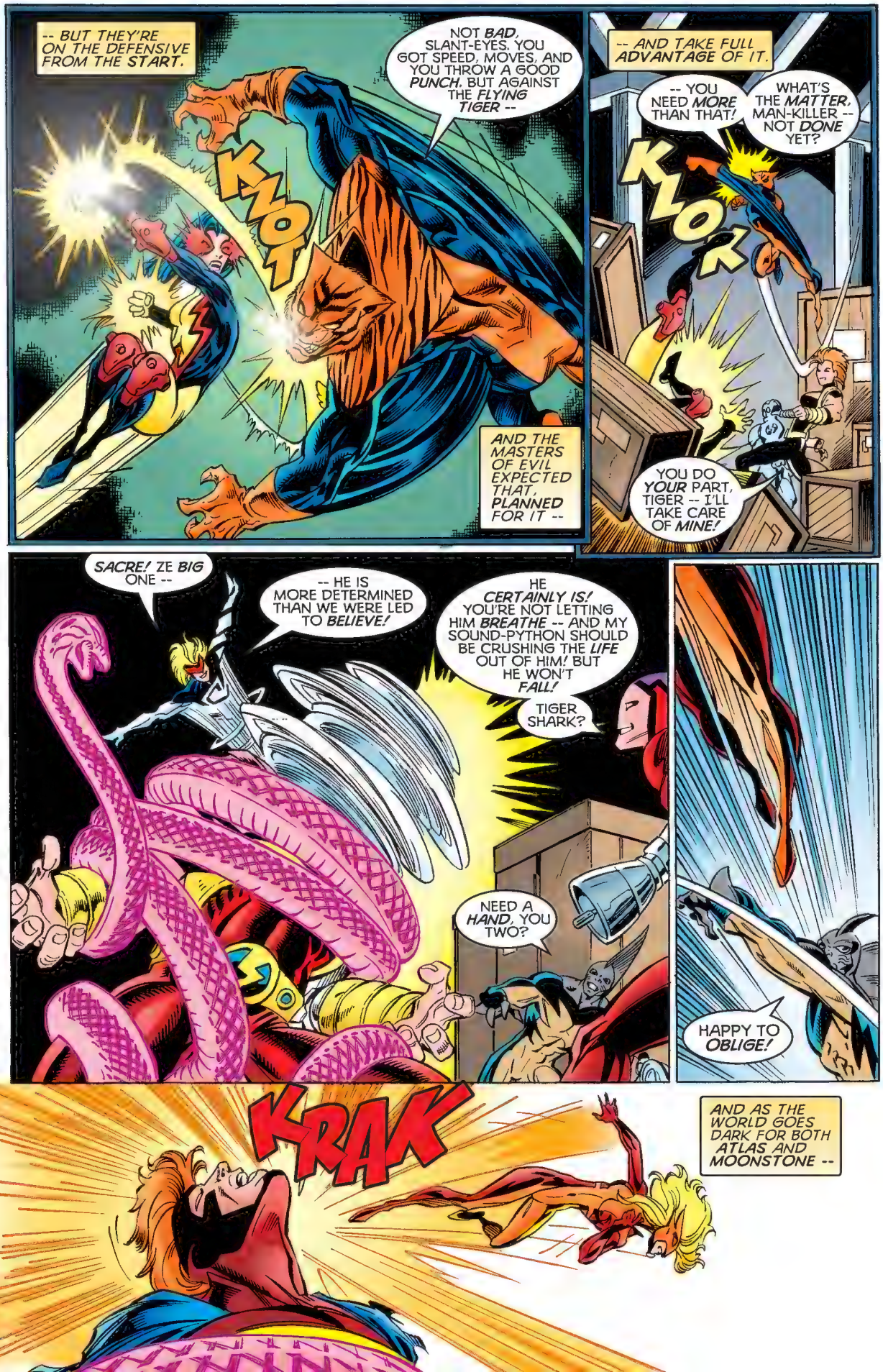

-- MAYBE WE CAN GET SOME ANSWERS!
I'M ON IT, I'M ON IT!
DID I MENTION THAT WHEN I BURN A LOT OF ENERGY LIKE THAT -- I'M REAL TIRED AFTERWARD?
BUT NEVER MIND, NEVER MIND -- I LIVE TO SERVE!
AND IF CYCLONE PAUSES IN HIS FLIGHT, AND LOOKS BACK --
-- AS IF TO MAKE SURE HE'S BEING FOLLOWED --
-- NOBODY NOTICES.
WELL, THAT WAS... HUMILIATIN'.
SO WHAT NOW, MOONSTONE?
NOW? WE WAIT FOR JOLT, I SUPPOSE -- AND START FIXING THE ROOF.
NOTHING BUT FUN, eh?
ATLAS CAN PULL APART THAT SHED, WHILE YOU AND I --
THIS... STINKS!

ALL THIS PRETENDING TO BE HEROES AND TRYING TO WIN OVER THE PUBLIC -- THIS WHOLE PLAN STINKS!
IT'S STUPID AND IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK AND I HATE LIVING LIKE THIS! IF I'M GOING TO RUN FROM THE COPS AND FIGHT ALL THE TIME --
-- I OUGHT TO AT LEAST BE MAKING MONEY AT IT!
SHE MEANS RETURNING TO CRIME. BUT IF SHE GOES --
IF SHE GOES, ABE'LL GO WITH HER. MAYBE I SHOULD --
THIS IS BAD. BUT I GOTTA -- I GOTTA SUPPORT THE TEAM --!
SHORTLY, MILES AWAY, ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A SMALL TOWN...
AHA!
JOLT TO MOONSTONE. COME IN, MOONSTONE.
I'VE TRACKED HIM BACK TO BASE. NO -- DON'T COME NOW. THE AREA'S TOO EXPOSED -- WE'LL HAVE TO WAIT FOR DARK.
BESIDES, I NEED TO REST...


AND, IN LOS ANGELES...
LET'S FACE IT, GENTLEMEN --
-- THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE HOT!
THIS FOOTAGE WE GOT OF THE TAIL END OF THEIR BATTLE WITH GRAVITON --
-- IT'S WON KTTA A RATINGS SPIKE ALMOST AS BIG AS THE RETURN OF THE AVENGERS. AND THE PUBLIC WANTS TO KNOW MORE.
THEY THOUGHT THE T-BOLTS WERE HEROES. AND THEN THEY FOUND OUT THEY WEREN'T.
BUT SINCE THEN -- WHAT? THE AVENGERS SAID SOME OF 'EM HELPED TAKE DOWN ZEMO. AND THEY CHASED GRAVITON OFF.
WHY WOULD CROOKS DO THAT?
IN #12 AGAIN -- Tom
YOU'RE NOT -- SUGGESTING THAT THEY'RE REALLY HEROES, GRANT -- ARE YOU?
THAT'S JUST PREPOSTEROUS.
I'M NOT SUGGESTING ANYTHING. JUST THAT THE PUBLIC IS CURIOUS. AND WE CAN GIVE 'EM THE FACTS, AS THEY ARISE --
-- OR WE CAN GIVE 'EM A TRUE-LIFE DRAMA. THAT'S WHERE MS. ROGERS COMES IN.
I SEE A SERIES OF REPORTS -- FROM A REPORTER FOLLOWING THE T-BOLTS FULL-TIME, ASKING THE QUESTIONS EVERYONE WANTS TO KNOW.
WHY ARE THE THUNDERBOLTS DOING THIS? ARE THEY REALLY CROOKS? OR DO WE HAVE HEROES IN OUR MIDST, AND DON'T EVEN KNOW IT?
WHAT DO YOU SAY, GAYLE? IT WON'T BE A CUSHY ASSIGNMENT --
-- BUT I CAN PRACTICALLY GUARANTEE NETWORK TIME.
I'VE ONLY GOT ONE QUESTION OF MY OWN, GRANT.

"WHEN DO I *LEAVE?*"
HE'S STILL *IN* THERE.
I DIDN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH TO LOOK IN -- BUT I *WATCHED* THE WHOLE TIME, AND *NO ONE* WENT IN OR OUT.
GOOD *WORK*, JOLT. ON YOUR TOES, EVERYONE. SONGBIRD, TAKE US DOWN -- BUT *SLOWLY*.
SURE. I'LL --
--*ALLLGH!*
H-*Huh?* SONGBIRD -- WHAT'RE YOU *DOIN'?*
Uh, *ATLAS?*
"I DON'T THINK THIS IS *HER!*"
WHKSH
Oh, *MAN*. SOMEBODY'S GOTTA *DO* SOMETHIN' ABOUT THE ELEVATORS IN THIS PLACE --!
NNH...
PULL YOURSELVES *TOGETHER*, THUNDERBOLTS -- AND DO IT *NOW!*
WE'RE NOT *ALONE!*

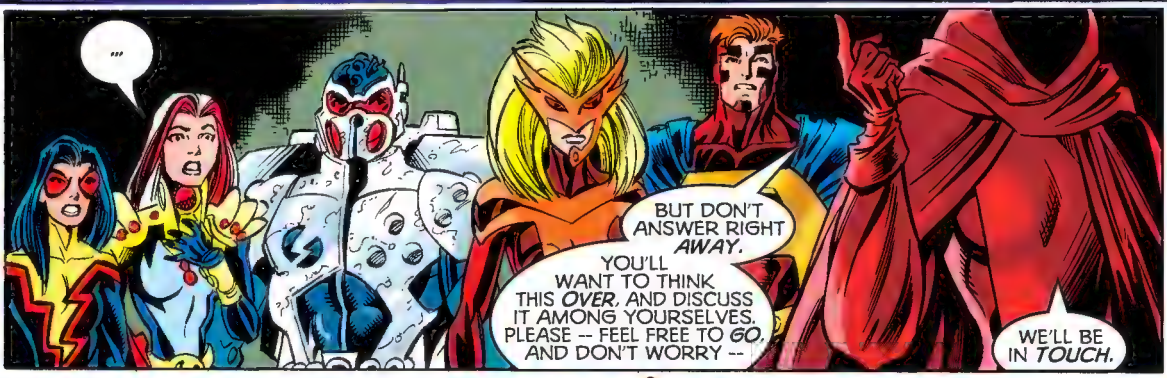
BON SOIR, CHERI! DID YOU MISS ME?
CEASE YOUR INFERNAL BLITHERING. CYCLONE. JUST ATTACK -- HARD AND FAST, AS WE PLANNED.
IT'S TIME TO SHOW THESE UPSTARTS WHAT'S WHAT --
"-- STARTING WITH THE WITCH WHO BOOTLEGGED MY SONIC TECHNOLOGY!"
Mmf!
MELISSA!
KROMM
RRAHH!
UHH!
HANG ON, MELISSA -- I'LL GET KLAW OFF YOU --
YOU'LL DO NOTHING, YOU WORTHLESS MALE INCOMPETENT --
-- BUT FALL!
WRAK
IT ONLY TAKES SECONDS. THE THUNDERBOLTS DO THEIR BEST --


-- BUT THEY'RE ON THE DEFENSIVE FROM THE START.
NOT BAD, SLANT-EYES. YOU GOT SPEED, MOVES, AND YOU THROW A GOOD PUNCH. BUT AGAINST THE FLYING TIGER --
KNOT
AND THE MASTERS OF EVIL EXPECTED THAT, PLANNED FOR IT --
-- AND TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF IT.
-- YOU NEED MORE THAN THAT!
WHAT'S THE MATTER, MAN-KILLER -- NOT DONE YET?
KNOK
YOU DO YOUR PART, TIGER -- I'LL TAKE CARE OF MINE!
SACRE! ZE BIG ONE --
-- HE IS MORE DETERMINED THAN WE WERE LED TO BELIEVE!
HE CERTAINLY IS! YOU'RE NOT LETTING HIM BREATHE -- AND MY SOUND-PYTHON SHOULD BE CRUSHING THE LIFE OUT OF HIM! BUT HE WON'T FALL!
TIGER SHARK?
NEED A HAND, YOU TWO?
HAPPY TO OBLIGE!
KRAK
AND AS THE WORLD GOES DARK FOR BOTH ATLAS AND MOONSTONE --

-- THE ONE-SIDED BATTLE ENDS. BUT, SOME MINUTES LATER...
H-Huh?
WE'RE NOT -- TIED UP OR ANYTHING --?
OF COURSE NOT, Mr. JENKINS.
YOU ARE FREE TO GO WHENEVER YOU WISH. I SIMPLY WANTED TO DISPEL ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT WHO HAS THE UPPER HAND HERE.
CRIMSON COWL, YOU SET THIS WHOLE THING UP -- SENDING CYCLONE TO REEL US IN, AND THEN AMBUSHING US. WHAT'S YOUR GAME?
NO GAME, Dr. SOFEN. I'M A BUSINESSWOMAN -- AND I'D LIKE TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER.
WHAT KIND OF OFFER?
IT'S VERY SIMPLE. I'D LIKE TO HIRE YOU, MOONSTONE -- ALL OF YOU. I'D LIKE THE THUNDERBOLTS TO JOIN MY MASTERS OF EVIL.
Oh, DON'T LOOK SO WARY -- THIS ISN'T SOME ARCANE REVENGE SCHEME.
THE MASTERS OF EVIL IS A FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION, NOT A VENDETTA. WE OFFER GENEROUS BASESALARIES, A PROFIT-SHARING DEAL --
-- EVEN A PENSION PLAN. KLAW, IF YOU WOULD --?
WE OPERATE OUT OF A HIDDEN BASE WITH ALL THE AMENITIES -- TRAINING FACILITIES, LABS -- EVEN OUR OWN MOVIE THEATER.
TUNNEL TO "BACK DOOR"
POWER
GYM
HANGAR
LIVING QUARTERS
POOL & SAUNA
HOLDING CELLS

WHOA. THAT'S NO CABIN IN THE WOODS.
DID THAT --
-- DID THAT SAY "SAUNA?"
WE TAKE CARE OF OUR ASSOCIATES, Ms. GOLD. AND WE OFFER MORE THAN PROFIT AND SANCTUARY. TAKE KLAW HERE --
-- HE RECENTLY FOUGHT SOLO AGAINST THE BLACK PANTHER, AND LOST -- BUT WE RESCUED HIM, REFITTED HIM AND HERE HE IS --
-- NONE THE WORSE FOR WEAR.
IS IT REALLY NECESSARY TO GO INTO THIS, COWL?
IN CABLE#54 – Tom.
WHY US, COWL? SURELY YOU COULD HAVE YOUR PICK OF PROFESSIONAL SUPER-VILLAINS.
WE DO. AND THAT'S WHY YOU.
YOU'RE GOOD -- WELL-TRAINED, CAPABLE PROFESSIONALS, WHO LACK NOTHING BUT DIRECTION.
YOU'D FIT IN WELL.
AND IF WE SAY NO?
I DO HATE TO RESORT TO PRESSURE TACTICS -- BUT SURELY IT HASN'T ESCAPED YOU THAT WE FOUND YOU EASILY --
-- AND CAN DO SO AGAIN.
SO WE JOIN UP, OR YOU TELL THE AUTHORITIES WHERE TO FIND US, Eh?
NO, NO -- NOT AT ALL.

WE'LL TELL *BARON STRUCKER.*
AND THE *WRECKING CREW.*
AND THE *MAD THINKER.*
AND ANYONE ELSE WHO MIGHT BEAR A *GRUDGE* AGAINST YOU, AND HAS NO INTEREST IN *DUE PROCESS.*


...
BUT DON'T ANSWER RIGHT *AWAY.*
YOU'LL WANT TO THINK THIS *OVER,* AND DISCUSS IT AMONG YOURSELVES. PLEASE -- FEEL FREE TO *GO.* AND DON'T WORRY --
WE'LL BE IN *TOUCH.*

AND AS THE THUNDERBOLTS SOAR SILENTLY THROUGH THE DARKENED SKY...
IT WOULD MEAN A *SUBORDINATE* POSITION AGAIN -- BUT THEN, THEY ALWAYS *ARE,* AT FIRST...
MELISSA'LL GO FOR IT -- I JUST *KNOW* IT. CAN I --
IT'D BE EASIER -- AND MORE *COMFORTABLE* --
I *CAN'T* LET THE TEAM DOWN -- IF THE *OTHERS* GO --
THEY'RE *THINKING* ABOUT IT! THEY'RE ACTUALLY *THINKING* ABOUT IT!
WHAT AM I GOING TO *DO* --?

NEXT

HARD CHOICES!

FEATURING: The WINNER of the WIZARD CREATE-A-VILLAIN CONTEST!

OH YEAH, THE THUNDERBOLTS WILL BE THERE TOO!

MARVEL COMICS
FEATURING: The WINNER of the WIZARD CREATE-A-VILLAIN CONTEST!
THUNDERBOLTS
OCT #19
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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BUSIEK
BAGLEY
HANNA
BAGLEY S.HANNA
The COMING of... CHARCOAL
The BURNING MAN!

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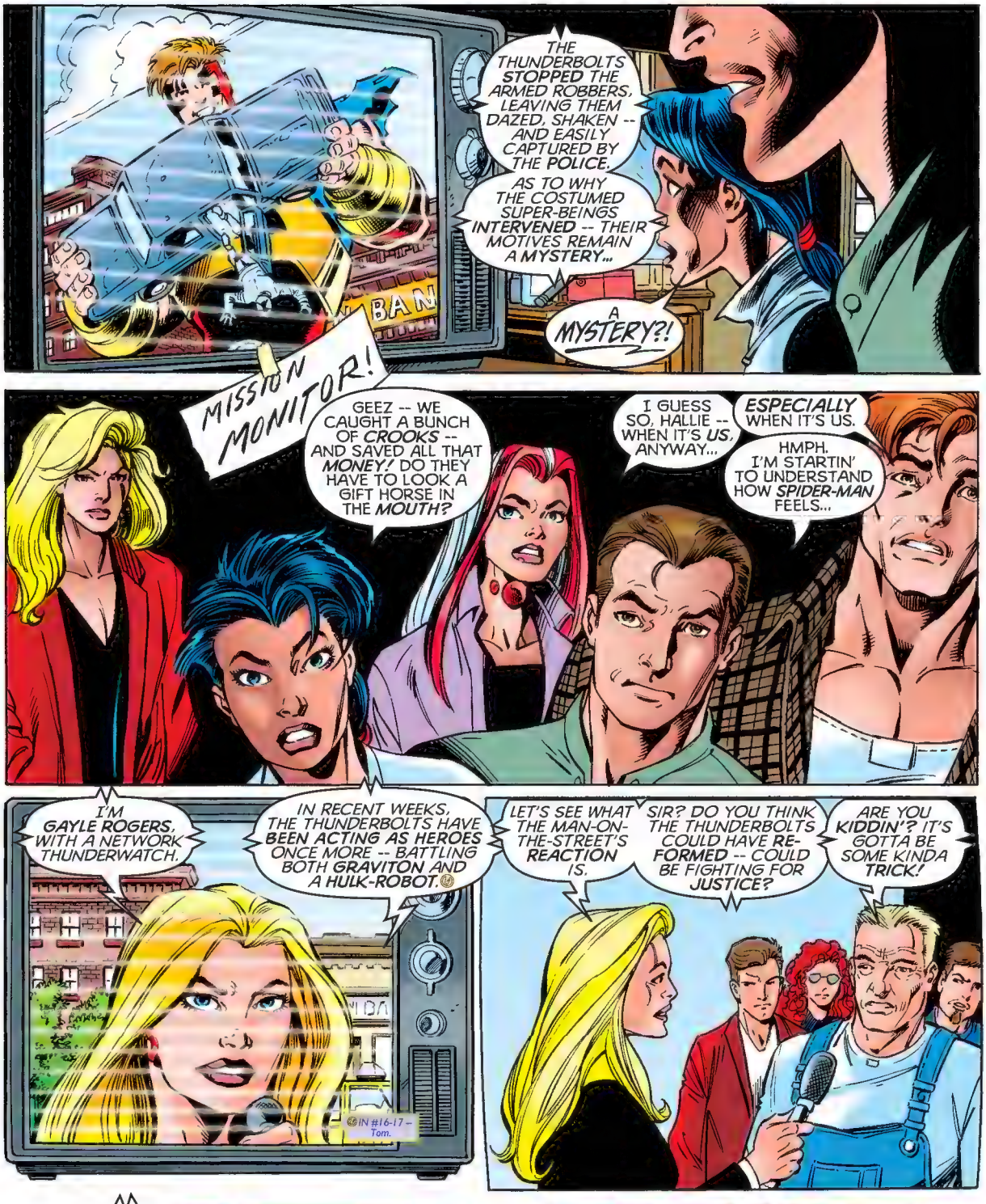

THE THUNDERBOLTS STOPPED THE ARMED ROBBERS, LEAVING THEM DAZED, SHAKEN -- AND EASILY CAPTURED BY THE POLICE.
AS TO WHY THE COSTUMED SUPER-BEINGS INTERVENED -- THEIR MOTIVES REMAIN A MYSTERY...
A MYSTERY?!
MISSION MONITOR!
GEEZ -- WE CAUGHT A BUNCH OF CROOKS -- AND SAVED ALL THAT MONEY! DO THEY HAVE TO LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH?
I GUESS SO, HALLIE -- WHEN IT'S US, ANYWAY...
ESPECIALLY WHEN IT'S US.
HMPH. I'M STARTIN' TO UNDERSTAND HOW SPIDER-MAN FEELS...
I'M GAYLE ROGERS, WITH A NETWORK THUNDERWATCH.
IN RECENT WEEKS, THE THUNDERBOLTS HAVE BEEN ACTING AS HEROES ONCE MORE -- BATTLING BOTH GRAVITON AND A HULK-ROBOT.
IN #16-17 – Tom.
LET'S SEE WHAT THE MAN-ON-THE-STREET'S REACTION IS.
SIR? DO YOU THINK THE THUNDERBOLTS COULD HAVE RE-FORMED -- COULD BE FIGHTING FOR JUSTICE?
ARE YOU KIDDIN'? IT'S GOTTA BE SOME KINDA TRICK!
MAYBE THEY WERE WORKING WITH THOSE BANK ROBBERS -- BUT THEY HAD A FALLING OUT, OR SOMETHING...
OR THEY COULD'VE BEEN CASING THE PLACE FOR THEIR OWN ROBBERY -- BUT THE OTHERS BEAT 'EM TO IT -- AND THEY GOT MAD...

IT'S NOT MUCH -- NOT AS BREAKING POINTS GO --
DID YOU HEAR THEM? THE CONTEMPT IN THEIR VOICES -- THEIR EYES! THEY'RE ACTING -- LIKE WE'RE WORMS OR SOEMTHING --
I'D LIKE TO RIP THAT GUY'S MUSTACHE OFF...
I DUNNO -- YOU'D THINK THEY'D AT LEAST CONSIDER THE IDEA THAT WE JUST DID IT 'CAUSE IT'S RIGHT --
-- BUT THEY'RE NOT EVER GONNA GIVE US A CHANCE, ARE THEY?
-- BUT SOMETIMES IT DOESN'T TAKE MUCH.
WELL, IF THIS IS HOW IT'S GONNA BE, ERIK --
-- NOT EVEN GRATEFUL --
SHE WANTS TO BE STRONG, TO BE ENCOURAGING.
SHE WANTS TO TELL THEM IT TAKES TIME, SO HANG IN THERE.
SHE WANTS TO REMIND THEM THAT THEY TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD --
-- AND THE PUBLIC WON'T FORGET THAT, NOT WITHOUT HARD WORK.
BUT SHE CAN'T MAKE THE WORDS COME OUT. SHE KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE THINKING ABOUT, EVEN IF THEY'RE NOT SAYING IT --
-- THEY'RE THINKING ABOUT THE CRIMSON COWL'S OFFER, TO HIRE THEM FOR HER MASTERS OF EVIL --
-- OFFERING THEM FAT SALARIES AND A FANCY HQ--
LAST ISSUE – Tom.
MAYBE THIS WASN'T A REALISTIC PLAN...
DON'T LOOK AT ME, ABE. I NEVER LIKED IT!
HEY, NOW --
SHE FEELS LIKE SHE'S PUSHING AGAINST THE TIDE, AND SHE CAN'T -- SHE CAN'T --
Oh...
STOP!

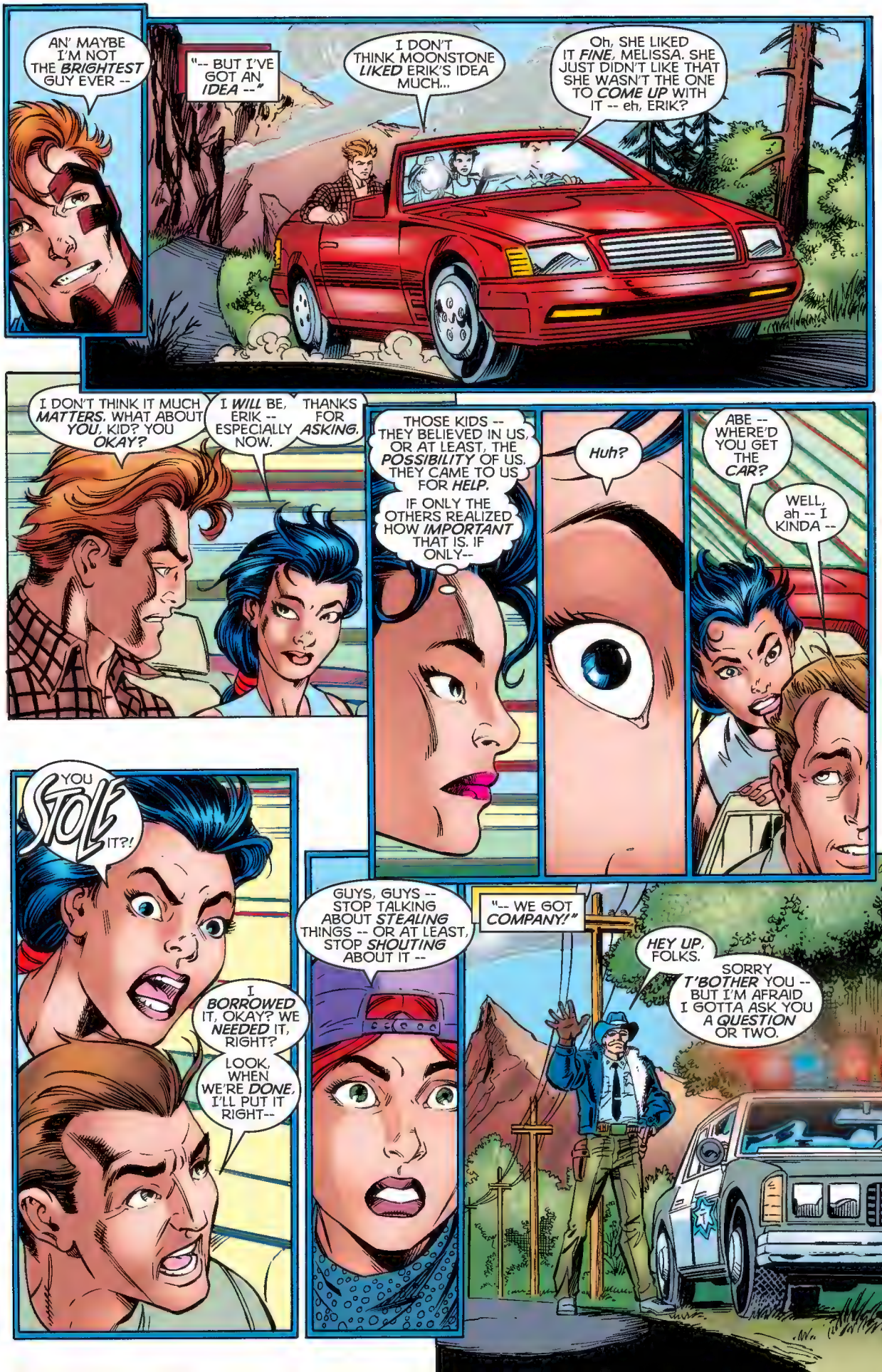
Huh?
WHAT?
HALLIE?
JUST SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP, ALL OF YOU!
I'M SICK OF THIS! SICK OF ALL THE TIME PLAYING CHEERLEADER, SAYING YOU CAN DO IT, YOU CAN MAKE IT --
-- AND ALL THE TIME, YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO, DO YOU?
YOU'D RATHER BE THIEVES, CRIMINALS -- AS LONG AS YOU'RE RICH!
HALLIE...
YOU SHUT UP, TOO! YOU, YOU'RE QUIET ALL THE TIME --
ALWAYS WATCHING, ALWAYS THINKING, BUT YOU'RE AS BAD AS --
Oh, FORGET IT! I CAN'T STAND TO LOOK AT YOU ANYMORE! ANY OF YOU!
JUST -- JUST -- DON'T COME NEAR ME!
WELL!
MELISSA, DON'T --
DON'T WHAT? YOU HEARD HER -- SHE'S THROUGH WITH US. SO --
Aw, C'MON, MELISSA...
"...SHE'S ONLY FIFTEEN YEARS OLD, AND WE'VE PUT HER THROUGH AN AWFUL LOT, THESE LAST FEW MONTHS..."
I'LL GO TALK TO HER -- SHE NEEDS SOME SYMPATHY RIGHT NOW...
SHE'S UPSET -- VULNERABLE. IT'S AN OPPORTUNITY TO SWAY HER, TO BRING HER MORE FIRMLY UNDER MY CONTROL...

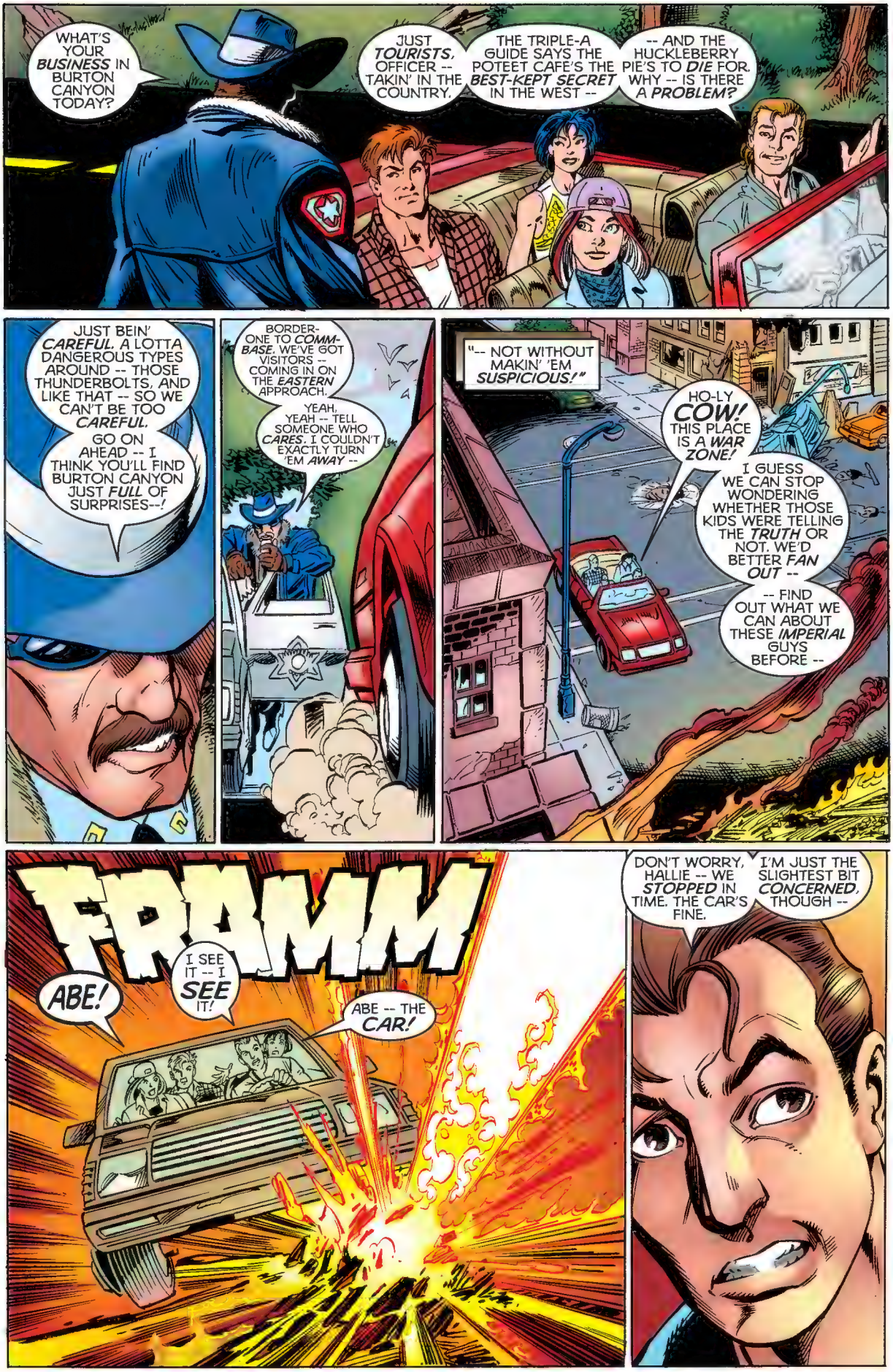
BUT BEFORE DR. KARLA SOFEN CAN MOVE...
NOK
NOK
Huh? THE DOOR? BUT --
"-- WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOODS --!"
Um, HI --
-- WE'RE, ah, LOOKING FOR THE THUNDERBOLTS--?
C.K.
THE THUNDERBOLTS? THEY'RE THOSE NOTORIOUS SUPER-VILLAINS ON THE NEWS, AREN'T THEY?
THIS IS MY COLLEAGUE'S VACATION CABIN -- WHY WOULD YOU EXPECT TO FIND SUPER-VILLAINS HERE --?
WELL, um, THIS CABIN -- IT WAS EMPTY FOR SO LONG, IT SORTA GOT TO BE A MAKE-OUT SPOT FOR THE LOCAL KIDS --
-- SO, WELL, WHEN YOU MOVED IN, WE WATCHED YOU, AND --
SO MUCH FOR YOUR HOTSHOT SECURITY SYSTEM -- huh, ABE?
IF NOBODY LOCKS THE DOOR, IT WON'T WORK! BESIDES, WE FOUGHT CYCLONE RIGHT OUTSIDE--
-- IT CAN'T DO MUCH ABOUT THAT--!
LAST ISSUE AGAIN. – Tom.
SO, JUST FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT, IF WE WERE THE THUNDERBOLTS -- WHAT WOULD YOU BE LOOKING FOR? BLACKMAIL MONEY?
Huh? NO WAY! WE CAME TO FIND YOU, BECAUSE, WELL --
-- WE NEED YOUR HELP!
C. K.

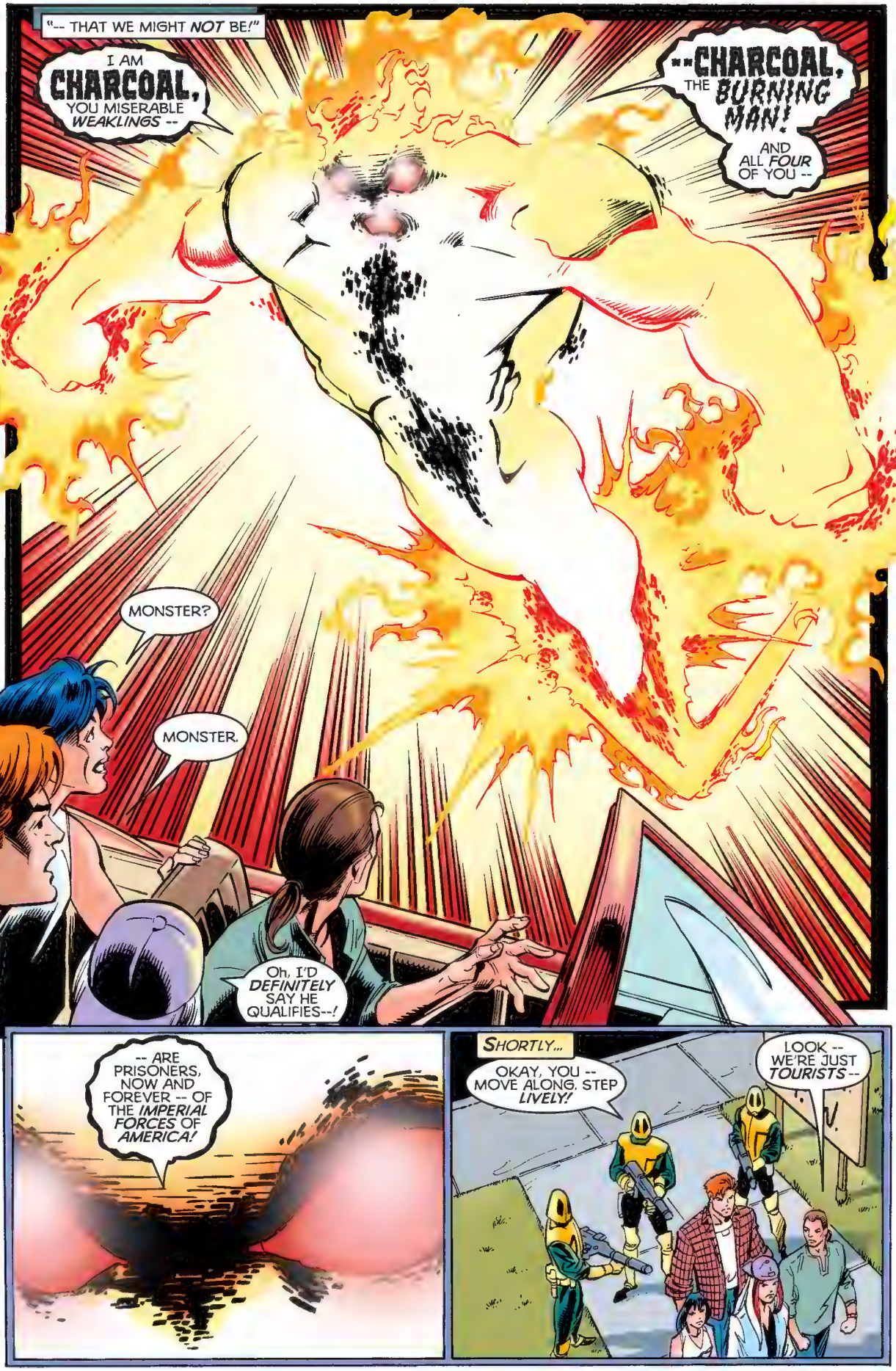
SEE, WE'RE FROM *BURTON CANYON*, JUST DOWN THE VALLEY FROM HERE -- AND, WELL, THIS MORNING --
"-- BURTON CANYON WAS INVADED BY SOME SORT OF *PRIVATE ARMY* --
"-- AND THEY WERE BACKED UP BY THIS GIANT *MONSTER!*
"THEY CALLED THEMSELVES THE *IMPERIAL FORCES* -- AND BETWEEN THEIR HIGH-TECH *WEAPONS* AND THE MONSTER'S *POWER-BLASTS* --
"-- THEY JUST RIPPED INTO THE TOWN -- BUSTING UP *BUILDINGS*, BLOCKADING ROADS, TAKING OVER THE *TELEPHONE COMPANY* --
"-- BURTON CANYON DIDN'T STAND A *CHANCE.*"
THEY *ROUSTED* EVERY-ONE--
"-- DRAGGED 'EM OUT OF THEIR *HOMES*, STORES, SCHOOL, *OFFICES* --
"-- AND HERDED 'EM ALL INTO THE *TOWN SQUARE.*"

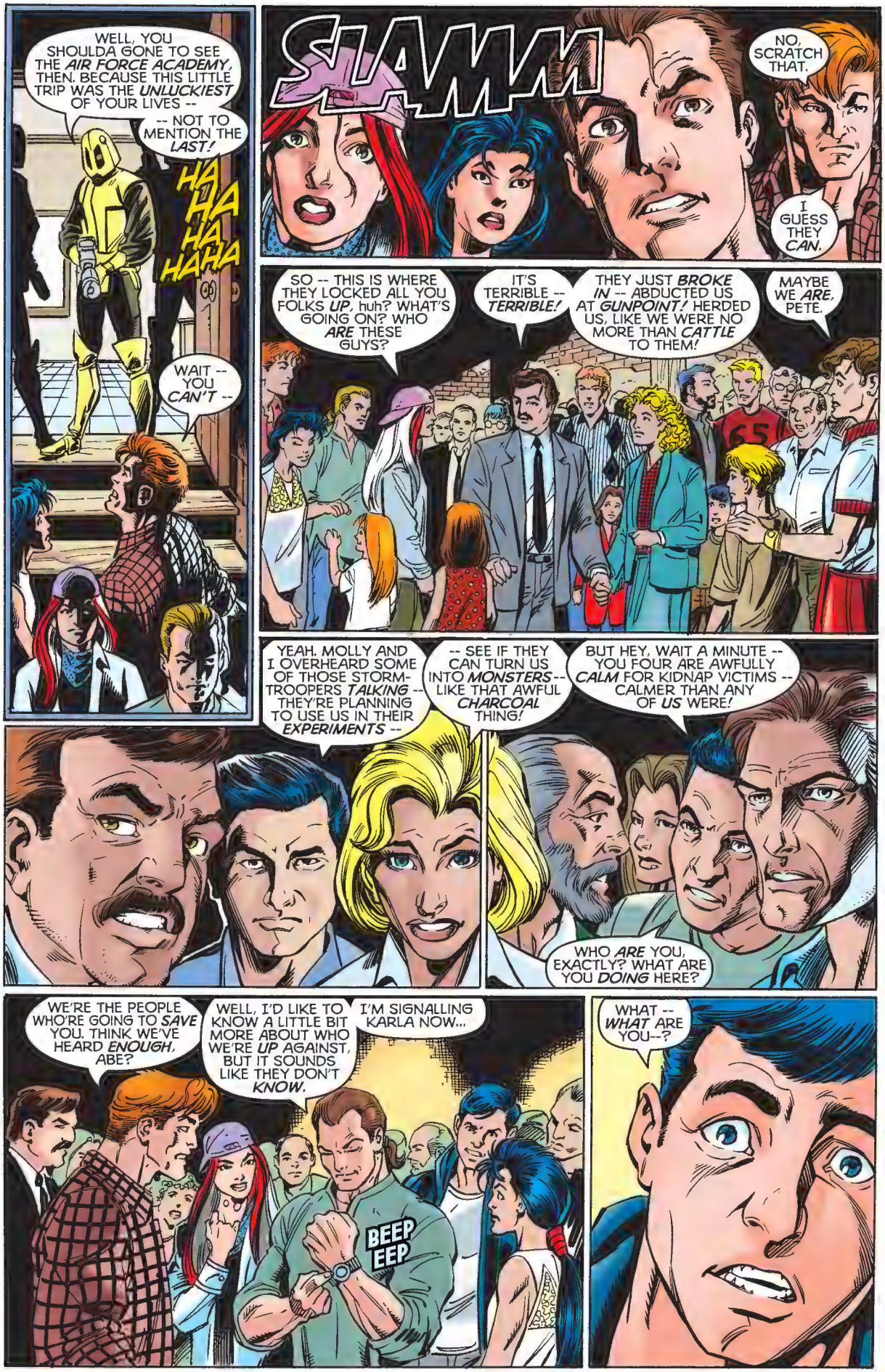
THAT'S WHEN THEY *TOLD* 'EM --
"-- TOLD 'EM THEY WEREN'T *U.S. CITIZENS* ANYMORE..."
YOU ARE *PRISONERS* NOW -- WITH NO RIGHTS, NO FREEDOMS --
-- EXCEPT THOSE THAT YOUR NEW MASTERS CHOOSE TO *GRANT* YOU!
THIS IS YOUR *LIFE* NOW. YOU'D DO WELL TO START GETTING *USED* TO IT -- BECAUSE IT WILL REMAIN YOUR LOT UNTIL THE DAY YOU ALL *DIE!*
"AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, WE'RE THE ONLY ONES WHO ESCAPED THE ROUND UP. WE'RE KINDA LIKE THE TOWN *TROUBLEMAKERS* --
"-- AND WE KNOW A LOT OF PLACES TO *HIDE.*
"ANYWAY, WE WATCHED WHAT THEY WERE DOIN' TO OUR *FOLKS,* OUR *FRIENDS* --
"-- AND THEN WE SNUCK INTO THE *SEWERS,* AND GOT OUTTA TOWN THAT WAY.
"THERE WASN'T A HECK OF A LOT WE COULD DO AGAINST EVEN *ONE* OF THOSE GUYS -- SO WE HAD TO FIND *SOME* KINDA HELP."
SO WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST GO TO THE *COPS?*
WE *DID.*
THE IMPERIAL GUYS HAD THE LOCAL *PHONE COMPANY* --
-- SO WHEN THE CALHOUN COPS CALLED IN TO CHECK, THE IMPERIALS JUST SAID EVERY-THING WAS *FINE* --
-- AND WHO'S GONNA BELIEVE A KID WHEN THERE'S A GROWNUP SAYING THERE'S *NO PROBLEM?*

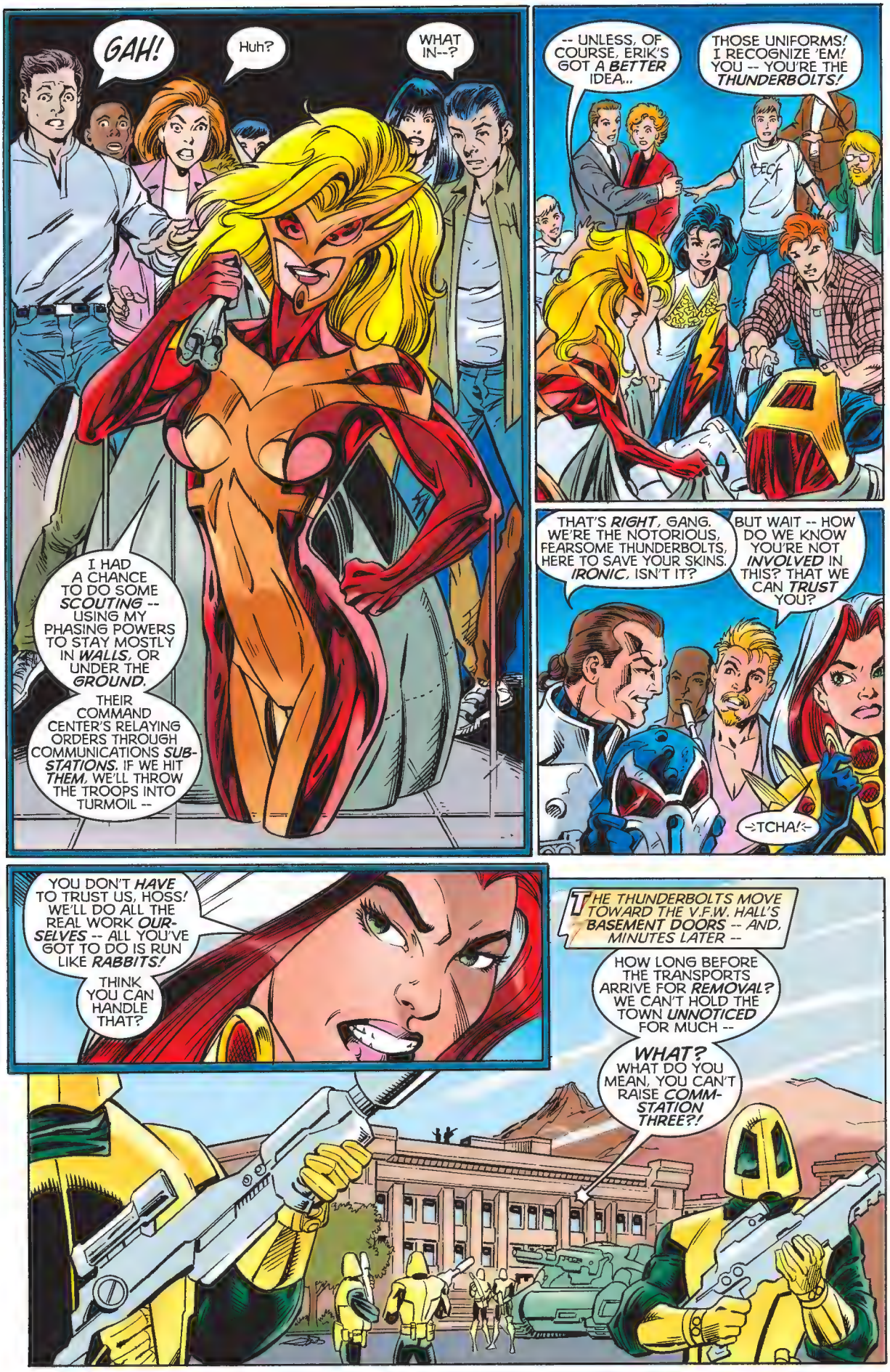
BUT THEN WE THOUGHT -- WE'D SEEN YOU GUYS ON TV, STOPPING THAT BANK ROBBERY -- AND HEARD MAYBE YOU WEREN'T CROOKS ANY-MORE --
-- AND, WELL, WE KNEW WHERE TO FIND YOU --
SO YOU THOUGHT YOU'D ASK US TO COME AND INVADE YOUR TOWN, WITH NO EVIDENCE WHATSOEVER --
-- BEYOND THE WORD OF SOME SELF-CONFESSED TROUBLEMAKERS WHOSE STORY THE POLICE HAVE ALREADY CHECKED OUT AND DISBELIEVED?
WELL... YEAH.
YOU'VE GOT TO ADMIT -- IT'S A PRETTY THIN STORY. IF IT WAS HYDRA, OR A.I.M. -- BUT THE "IMPERIAL FORCES"?
YEAH -- YOU'D HAVE TO BE A MORON TO EXPECT ANY-ONE TO BELIEVE THAT!
LIKE WE'RE EXPECTIN' PEOPLE TO BELIEVE WE'VE UP AND REFORMED? THAT KINDA MORON?
LISTEN, MAYBE WE SHOULD GET HAL-- JOLT. SEE WHAT SHE THINKS OF--
NO.
WE CAN MAKE THIS DECISION WITHOUT JOLT. IF WE'RE GOING TO BE A TEAM, WE'VE GOT TO BE TOGETHER ON STUFF LIKE THIS --
-- INSTEAD OF PILING IT ON HER TO MAKE ALL THE DECISIONS, AND THEN GROUSING WHEN THINGS GO WRONG.
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK, GUYS?
DO WE GO... OR NOT?
"SO," SAYS ERIK, AFTER A LONG PAUSE,
"NOW THAT WE'RE DECIDED... CAN WE GO GET JOLT NOW?"
I SEE SMOKE, BUT NO SIGN OF ANY ARMY -- OR EVEN ANY TRAFFIC ON THE ROADS. WE'D BETTER MOVE IN -- AND BE READY FOR ANYTHING...
Ah, HOLD UP, MOONSTONE. WE DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT WHAT'S IN THERE, SO WE OUGHT TO HAVE A PLAN --
-- A WAY TO GET INFORMATION, AT LEAST.


AN' MAYBE I'M NOT THE BRIGHTEST GUY EVER --
"-- BUT I'VE GOT AN IDEA --"
I DON'T THINK MOONSTONE LIKED ERIK'S IDEA MUCH...
Oh, SHE LIKED IT FINE, MELISSA. SHE JUST DIDN'T LIKE THAT SHE WASN'T THE ONE TO COME UP WITH IT -- eh, ERIK?
I DON'T THINK IT MUCH MATTERS. WHAT ABOUT YOU, KID? YOU OKAY?
I WILL BE, ERIK -- ESPECIALLY NOW.
THANKS FOR ASKING.
THOSE KIDS -- THEY BELIEVED IN US, OR AT LEAST, THE POSSIBILITY OF US. THEY CAME TO US FOR HELP.
IF ONLY THE OTHERS REALIZED HOW IMPORTANT THAT IS. IF ONLY--
Huh?
ABE -- WHERE'D YOU GET THE CAR?
WELL, ah -- I KINDA --
YOU STOLE IT?!
I BORROWED IT, OKAY? WE NEEDED IT, RIGHT?
LOOK, WHEN WE'RE DONE, I'LL PUT IT RIGHT--
GUYS, GUYS -- STOP TALKING ABOUT STEALING THINGS -- OR AT LEAST, STOP SHOUTING ABOUT IT --
"-- WE GOT COMPANY!"
HEY UP, FOLKS.
SORRY T'BOTHER YOU -- BUT I'M AFRAID I GOTTA ASK YOU A QUESTION OR TWO.


WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS IN BURTON CANYON TODAY?
JUST TOURISTS, OFFICER -- TAKIN' IN THE COUNTRY.
THE TRIPLE-A GUIDE SAYS THE POTEET CAFE'S THE BEST-KEPT SECRET IN THE WEST --
-- AND THE HUCKLEBERRY PIE'S TO DIE FOR. WHY -- IS THERE A PROBLEM?
JUST BEIN' CAREFUL. A LOTTA DANGEROUS TYPES AROUND -- THOSE THUNDERBOLTS, AND LIKE THAT -- SO WE CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL.
GO ON AHEAD -- I THINK YOU'LL FIND BURTON CANYON JUST FULL OF SURPRISES--!
BORDER-ONE TO COMM-BASE. WE'VE GOT VISITORS -- COMING IN ON THE EASTERN APPROACH.
YEAH, YEAH -- TELL SOMEONE WHO CARES. I COULDN'T EXACTLY TURN 'EM AWAY --
"-- NOT WITHOUT MAKIN' 'EM SUSPICIOUS!"
HO-LY COW! THIS PLACE IS A WAR ZONE!
I GUESS WE CAN STOP WONDERING WHETHER THOSE KIDS WERE TELLING THE TRUTH OR NOT. WE'D BETTER FAN OUT --
-- FIND OUT WHAT WE CAN ABOUT THESE IMPERIAL GUYS BEFORE --
FRAMM
ABE!
I SEE IT -- I SEE IT!
ABE -- THE CAR!
DON'T WORRY, HALLIE -- WE STOPPED IN TIME. THE CAR'S FINE.
I'M JUST THE SLIGHTEST BIT CONCERNED, THOUGH --


"-- THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE!"
I AM CHARCOAL, YOU MISERABLE WEAKLINGS --
--CHARCOAL, THE BURNING MAN! AND ALL FOUR OF YOU --
MONSTER?
MONSTER.
Oh, I'D DEFINITELY SAY HE QUALIFIES--!
-- ARE PRISONERS, NOW AND FOREVER -- OF THE IMPERIAL FORCES OF AMERICA!
SHORTLY...
OKAY, YOU -- MOVE ALONG. STEP LIVELY!
LOOK -- WE'RE JUST TOURISTS --


WELL, YOU SHOULDA GONE TO SEE THE AIR FORCE ACADEMY, THEN. BECAUSE THIS LITTLE TRIP WAS THE UNLUCKIEST OF YOUR LIVES --
-- NOT TO MENTION THE LAST!
HA HA HA HAHA
WAIT -- YOU CAN'T --
SLAMM
NO, SCRATCH THAT.
I GUESS THEY CAN.
SO -- THIS IS WHERE THEY LOCKED ALL YOU FOLKS UP, huh? WHAT'S GOING ON? WHO ARE THESE GUYS?
IT'S TERRIBLE -- TERRIBLE!
THEY JUST BROKE IN -- ABDUCTED US AT GUNPOINT! HERDED US, LIKE WE WERE NO MORE THAN CATTLE TO THEM!
MAYBE WE ARE, PETE.
YEAH. MOLLY AND I OVERHEARD SOME OF THOSE STORM-TROOPERS TALKING -- THEY'RE PLANNING TO USE US IN THEIR EXPERIMENTS --
-- SEE IF THEY CAN TURN US INTO MONSTERS -- LIKE THAT AWFUL CHARCOAL THING!
BUT HEY, WAIT A MINUTE -- YOU FOUR ARE AWFULLY CALM FOR KIDNAP VICTIMS -- CALMER THAN ANY OF US WERE!
WHO ARE YOU, EXACTLY? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WE'RE THE PEOPLE WHO'RE GOING TO SAVE YOU. THINK WE'VE HEARD ENOUGH, ABE?
WELL, I'D LIKE TO KNOW A LITTLE BIT MORE ABOUT WHO WE'RE UP AGAINST, BUT IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY DON'T KNOW.
I'M SIGNALLING KARLA NOW...
BEEP EEP
WHAT -- WHAT ARE YOU--?


GAH!
Huh?
WHAT IN--?
I HAD A CHANCE TO DO SOME SCOUTING -- USING MY PHASING POWERS TO STAY MOSTLY IN WALLS, OR UNDER THE GROUND.
THEIR COMMAND CENTER'S RELAYING ORDERS THROUGH COMMUNICATIONS SUB-STATIONS. IF WE HIT THEM, WE'LL THROW THE TROOPS INTO TURMOIL --
-- UNLESS, OF COURSE, ERIK'S GOT A BETTER IDEA...
THOSE UNIFORMS! I RECOGNIZE 'EM! YOU -- YOU'RE THE THUNDERBOLTS!
THAT'S RIGHT, GANG. WE'RE THE NOTORIOUS, FEARSOME THUNDERBOLTS, HERE TO SAVE YOUR SKINS. IRONIC, ISN'T IT?
BUT WAIT -- HOW DO WE KNOW YOU'RE NOT INVOLVED IN THIS? THAT WE CAN TRUST YOU?
-:TCHA!:-
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TRUST US, HOSS! WE'LL DO ALL THE REAL WORK OUR-SELVES -- ALL YOU'VE GOT TO DO IS RUN LIKE RABBITS!
THINK YOU CAN HANDLE THAT?
THE THUNDERBOLTS MOVE TOWARD THE V.F.W. HALL'S BASEMENT DOORS -- AND, MINUTES LATER --
HOW LONG BEFORE THE TRANSPORTS ARRIVE FOR REMOVAL? WE CAN'T HOLD THE TOWN UNNOTICED FOR MUCH --
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU CAN'T RAISE COMM-STATION THREE?!

BLAST IT! IF GEORGETOWN'S DESERTED HIS POST, I SWEAR I'LL--
Uh, SIR? I'VE JUST GOTTEN ANOTHER REPORT -- STATIONS ONE, FOUR AND FIVE AREN'T ANSWERING EITHER. AND RALEIGH, ON THE ROOF --
-- HE SAYS HE HEARD GUN-FIRE--!
WHAT?! BUT THAT'S IM--
BRAKKAK WHAM WHAM
Hm? OUTSIDE--!
IT'S THE THUNDERBOLTS! BUT HOW DID THEY--?
IT DOESN'T MATTER HOW, YOU IGNORANT OAF! ONLY THAT THEY'RE HERE!
AND YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO, DON'T YOU?
YES!
I'LL DESTROY THEM --
DESTROY THEM ALL!
AWRIGHT -- HERE'S THAT MONSTER!
GOOD THING, TOO -- I WAS GETTIN' BORED SWATTIN' AROUND THESE LITTLE YELLOW-HEADED SPUDS--!

I'M NOT A MONSTER! I'M CHARCOAL, YOU HEAR ME --
-- CHARCOAL, THE BURNING MAN!
ATLAS!
WHOOM
UHHH!
AND NOW --
WRAK
AND NOW, PAL, YOU'RE GOING TO GET YOUR CLOCK CLEANED --
-- IF YOU THINK THAT WAS ENOUGH TO TAKE OUT ATLAS!
THOOM
THOOM

HAH! HE'S DOWN!
NOT FOR LONG, JERK! I'LL --
ATLAS, NO! I'LL HANDLE HIM!
THE OTHERS HAVE BEEN GETTING TOO INDEPENDENT! TIME TO REMIND THEM WHO THEIR LEADER IS!
YOU'LL HANDLE NOTHING, LADY!
NOT WHEN I CAN CHANGE TO ANY FORM OF CARBON --
KRAKK
H-UHH!
-- FROM SOFT, HEAVY COAL -- TO PUREST DIAMOND!
NICE TRICK, GUY! BUT WE ALL KNOW TRICKS -- LIKE MY BIO-ELECTRIC JOLTS!
KRAAK
GHAKK!
NOW HOW ABOUT SOME REAL INFORMATION -- LIKE WHAT YOU GOONS ARE DOING HERE!
WHY ARE YOU KIDNAPPING A WHOLE TOWN? DO YOU WORK FOR ARNIM ZOLA? FOR SOME OTHER SADISTIC PSYCHO? TELL US!
ZOLA?
YOU'LL NEVER KNOW, GIRL! NOT UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE --
-- UNTIL THE COUNTRY'S OURS!
JOLT -- GET BACK! LET ME TRY A MINI-MISSILE ON--

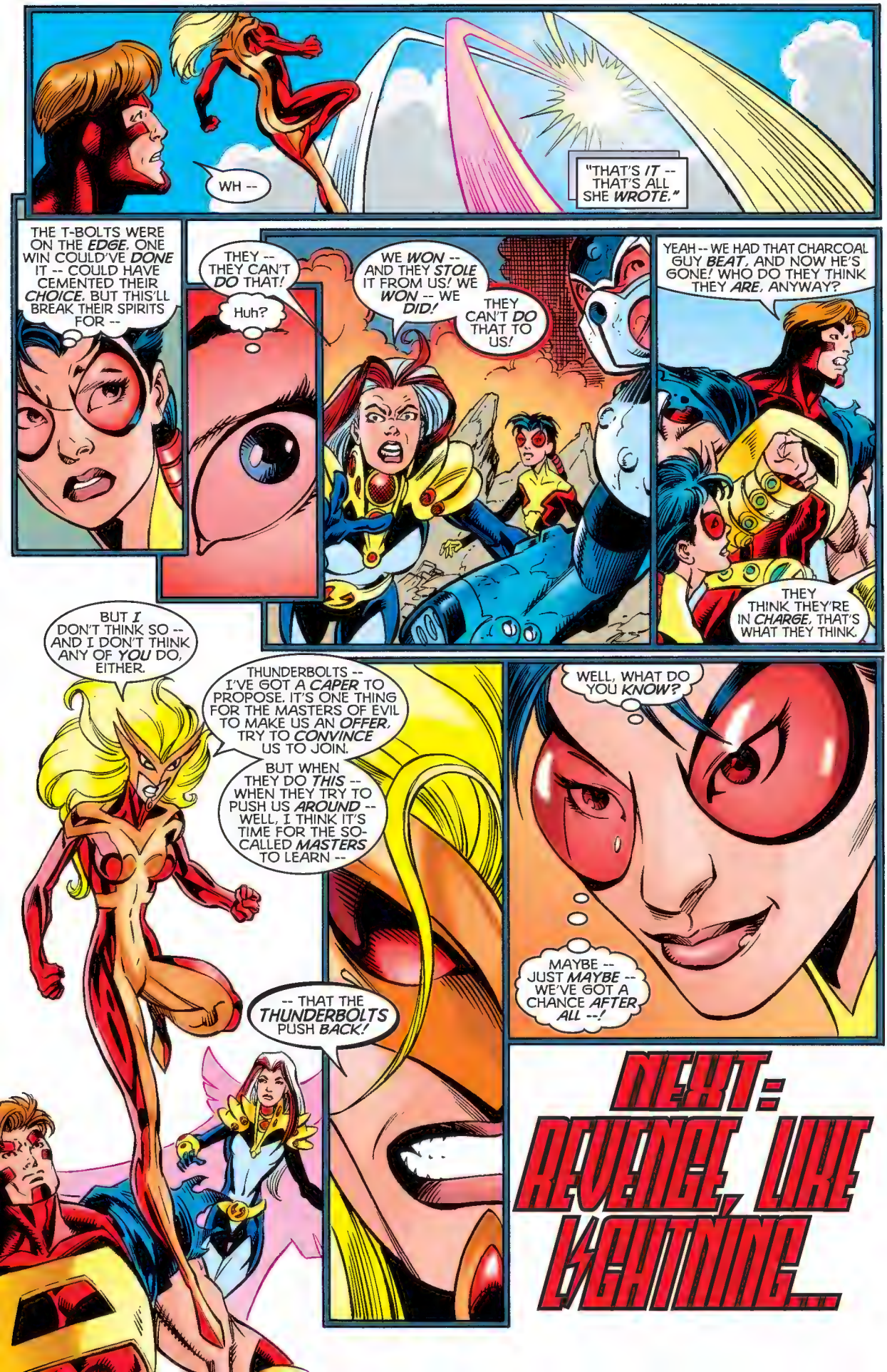
Oh, GREAT! MY SUIT -- MALFUNCTIONING!©
POOP
MACH-1 --
©IT WAS DAMAGED IN #17 -- Tom
-- IF YOU CAN'T PITCH IN, GET OUT OF THE WAY!
YOU CAN'T DO ANY BETTER THAN HIM, WINGS!
YOU CAN'T STOP WHAT'S COMING!
NONE OF YOU CAN! AND EVEN IF YOU COULD, YOU'D NEVER GET THE CHANCE --
-- BECAUSE NONE OF YOU ARE TOUGH ENOUGH TO BEAT ME!
Uh-Oh -- HE'S AIRBORNE AGAIN! THAT MAKES HIM MORE MANEUVERABLE!
NO DUH, MOONSTONE! ANYTHING ELSE OBVIOUS YOU WANT TO POINT OUT --
-- OR DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEAS ON HOW TO STOP HIM?
I DO!
AND I'M PIPING IT INTO EVERYONE'S COMM-UNITS!
LISTEN UP, T-BOLTS...

"MOON-STONE -- LURE HIM UP HIGH!"
WHAT IS THIS -- ROUND-ROBIN LEADER DAY?
FOOM
"SONGBIRD -- TRAP HIS FEET IN A SOLID-SOUND SPHERE! THAT'LL STOP HIM BLASTING--"
THIS BETTER WORK, ABE!
"-- AND WHEN HE FALLS --
"-- HE'S ALL SET UP FOR ATLAS!"
OH, YEAH!
WHROKK
I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, ABE -- THAT WASN'T HALF BAD!
MAYBE NOT, SONG-BIRD --
"-- BUT IT WASN'T ENOUGH, EITHER!"
RRRAHH!
KRAKH
I'LL KILL YOU! KILL YOU ALL! I'LL --

MAYBE IT DIDN'T WORK *RIGHT OFF*, MACH-1 -- BUT IT WAS A GOOD *IDEA!*
SO LET'S *KEEP IT UP!* MOONSTONE -- HE'S FOCUSED ON ME --
-- SO *YOU* TAKE HIM!
FINE, *FINE!* I GET THE *IDEA!*
KLOW
GHUHH!
JOLT -- DON'T GIVE HIM A CHANCE TO *RECOVER!*
YOU KNOW, THIS SEEMS AWFULLY *BRUTAL* -- BUT WHEN I THINK OF WHAT THEY WERE GOING TO DO TO ALL THOSE *PEOPLE* --
KZATT
WHUHH!
SONGBIRD! YOU'RE *UP!*
SO WHAT IS THIS -- A *TAG-TEAM* MATCH, OR A *CHALLENGE DANCE?*
DOES IT *MATTER?* MOONSTONE -- *HIT* HIM!
COMMANDER -- WHAT DO WE *DO?* DO WE BACK HIM UP, OR --
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE OUR *MUSCLE*, BUT HE'S FAILING -- *BADLY!* SEND THE EVAC ORDER -- WE'RE GETTING *OUT* OF HERE!
THERE'S ALWAYS MORE *MUSCLE* -- BUT IF WE'RE CAPTURED --

"-- IT'LL COMPROMISE THE WHOLE *OPERATION!*"
Oh, *MAN!* LOOK AT THIS! IT'S ALMOST *TOO* --
-- Huh? ATLAS -- *NO!*
Huh?
NOT THE *CAR*, ATLAS! NOT THE *CAR!*
IT'S NOT *OURS!* WE *"BORROWED"* IT, REMEMBER? WE HAVE TO PUT IT B--
CRASH!!
Huh?!
WHAT?
WHO?
Oh, NO. NOT *THEM* --

"-- NOT THE MASTERS OF EVIL!"
NOW IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE PARTNERS, YOU OVERSIZED HAYSEED?
A THOUSAND PARDONS FOR INTERRUPTING YOUR FUN, T-BOLTS -- ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING WHAT YOU WERE DOING!
BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO WORK THIS WAY!
Huh? WHAT DO YOU --
THE CRIMSON COWL MADE YOU AN OFFER -- GAVE YOU A CHANCE TO JOIN THE MASTERS -- AND SHE GAVE YOU TIME TO THINK IT OVER, TOO!
BUT THAT'S ALL YOU GET -- TIME TO THINK IT OVER!
YOU DON'T GET TO PLAY HERO IN THE MEANTIME -- TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER WAY OUT OF THE JAM YOU'RE IN!
"YOU JOIN THE MASTERS -- OR YOU GO DOWN. NO OTHER OPTIONS."
WE'VE GOT A JOB OR TWO TO DO -- PICKING UP SOME NEWLY-MINTED OPERATING FUNDS, FOR ONE --
-- BUT ONCE THAT'S OVER, WE'LL BE BACK FOR YOUR ANSWER. IN THE MEANTIME, YOU WON'T TRY TO JERK US AROUND --
-- NOT IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU!


WH --
"THAT'S IT -- THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE."
THE T-BOLTS WERE ON THE EDGE. ONE WIN COULD'VE DONE IT -- COULD HAVE CEMENTED THEIR CHOICE. BUT THIS'LL BREAK THEIR SPIRITS FOR --
THEY -- THEY CAN'T DO THAT!
Huh?
WE WON -- AND THEY STOLE IT FROM US! WE WON -- WE DID!
THEY CAN'T DO THAT TO US!
YEAH -- WE HAD THAT CHARCOAL GUY BEAT, AND NOW HE'S GONE! WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE, ANYWAY?
THEY THINK THEY'RE IN CHARGE, THAT'S WHAT THEY THINK.
BUT I DON'T THINK SO -- AND I DON'T THINK ANY OF YOU DO, EITHER.
THUNDERBOLTS -- I'VE GOT A CAPER TO PROPOSE. IT'S ONE THING FOR THE MASTERS OF EVIL TO MAKE US AN OFFER, TRY TO CONVINCE US TO JOIN.
BUT WHEN THEY DO THIS -- WHEN THEY TRY TO PUSH US AROUND -- WELL, I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THE SO-CALLED MASTERS TO LEARN --
-- THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS PUSH BACK!
WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
MAYBE -- JUST MAYBE -- WE'VE GOT A CHANCE AFTER ALL --!
NEXT: REVENGE, LIKE LIGHTNING...

MARVEL COMICS
NOV
#20
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
BAGLEY

Stan Lee presents: Marvel's Next Avalanche
DECISIONS PART 1:
TURNING POINT
BY KURT BUSIEK & MARK BAGLEY
JON HOLDREDGE INKER
JOE ROSAS COLORS
LETTERS RS & COMICRAFT'S LIZ AGRAPHIOTIS
TOM BREVOORT EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF
LATE EVENING. FORT WORTH, TEXAS.
THEY ARE THE THUNDERBOLTS. ONCE, THEY WERE THE MASTERS OF EVIL, SUPER-VILLAINS IN THE SERVICE OF THE INFAMOUS BARON ZEMO --
EVERYBODY READY?
-- POSING AS HEROES AS PART OF AN ELABORATE PLAN FOR GLOBAL-DOMINATION.
BUT THEY TURNED AGAINST ZEMO, AND THWARTED HIS PLANS --
-- AND NOW THEY HOPE TO CONVINCE THE WORLD TO ACCEPT THEM AS HEROES ONCE MORE -- TO ACCEPT THAT THEY'VE REFORMED --
-- THAT THEY SEEK TO DO GOOD, NOW, IN ATONEMENT FOR THEIR PAST. THEY ARE THE THUNDERBOLTS --
-- AND AFTER TONIGHT, THEIR LIVES WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN.

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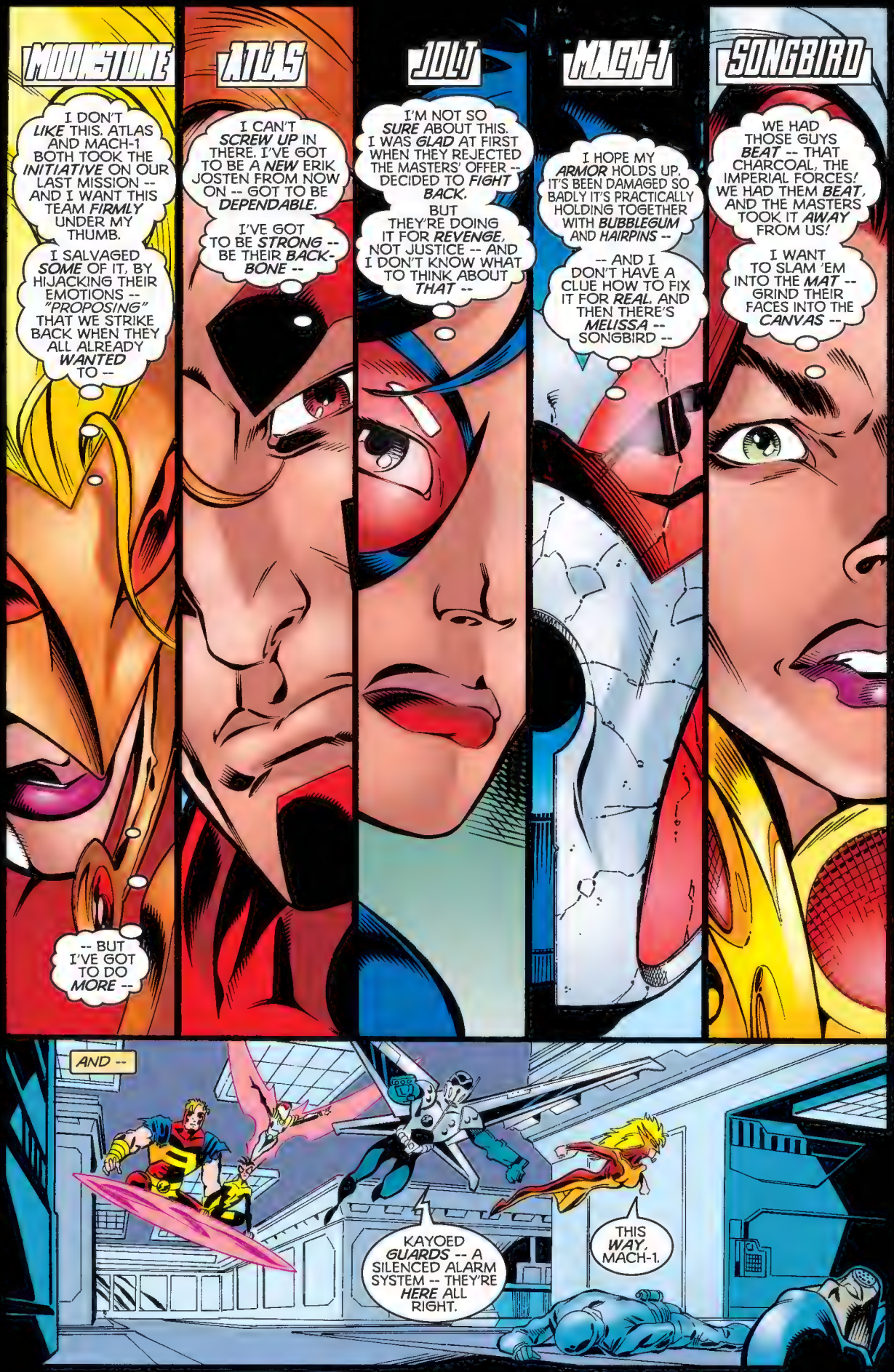
THE SEEDS OF THIS NIGHT WERE SOWN WEEKS AGO -- WHEN THE CRIMSON COWL OFFERED THE T-BOLTS A PLACE IN HER NEW MASTERS OF EVIL --
Oh, DON'T LOOK SO WARY -- THIS ISN'T SOME ARCANE REVENGE SCHEME.
THE MASTERS OF EVIL IS A FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION. NOT A VENDETTA.
WE OFFER GENEROUS BASE SALARIES, A PROFIT-SHARING DEAL --
-- EVEN A PENSION PLAN.
-- AND TOOK ROOT IN THE BESIEGED TOWN OF BURTON CANYON, WHEN THE MASTERS DISRUPTED THE T-BOLTS' MISSION OF MERCY --
THE CRIMSON COWL MADE YOU AN OFFER -- GAVE YOU A CHANCE TO JOIN THE MASTERS -- AND SHE GAVE YOU TIME TO THINK IT OVER, TOO!
BUT THAT'S ALL YOU GET -- TIME TO THINK IT OVER!
YOU DON'T GET TO PLAY HERO IN THE MEANTIME -- TO LOOK FOR ANOTHER WAY OUT OF THE JAM YOU'RE IN!
YOU JOIN THE MASTERS -- OR YOU GO DOWN. NO OTHER OPTIONS.
IN#18. LAST ISSUE -- Tom.
WHO DO THEY THINK THEY ARE, ANYWAY?
THEY THINK THEY'RE IN CHARGE, THAT'S WHAT THEY THINK. BUT I DON'T THINK SO -- AND I DON'T THINK ANY OF YOU DO, EITHER.
IT'S ONE THING FOR THE MASTERS OF EVIL TO MAKE US AN OFFER.
BUT WHEN THEY DO THIS -- WHEN THEY TRY TO PUSH US AROUND --
-- WELL, I THINK IT'S TIME FOR THE SO-CALLED MASTERS TO LEARN THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS PUSH BACK!
AND NOW IT BLOOMS -- AT THE WESTERN CURRENCY FACILITY OF THE BUREAU OF PRINTING AND ENGRAVING, OUTSIDE FORT WORTH --
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES. COUNT TO FIVE, AND MOVE IN.
THE T-BOLTS PAUSE, GATHERING THEIR THOUGHTS --

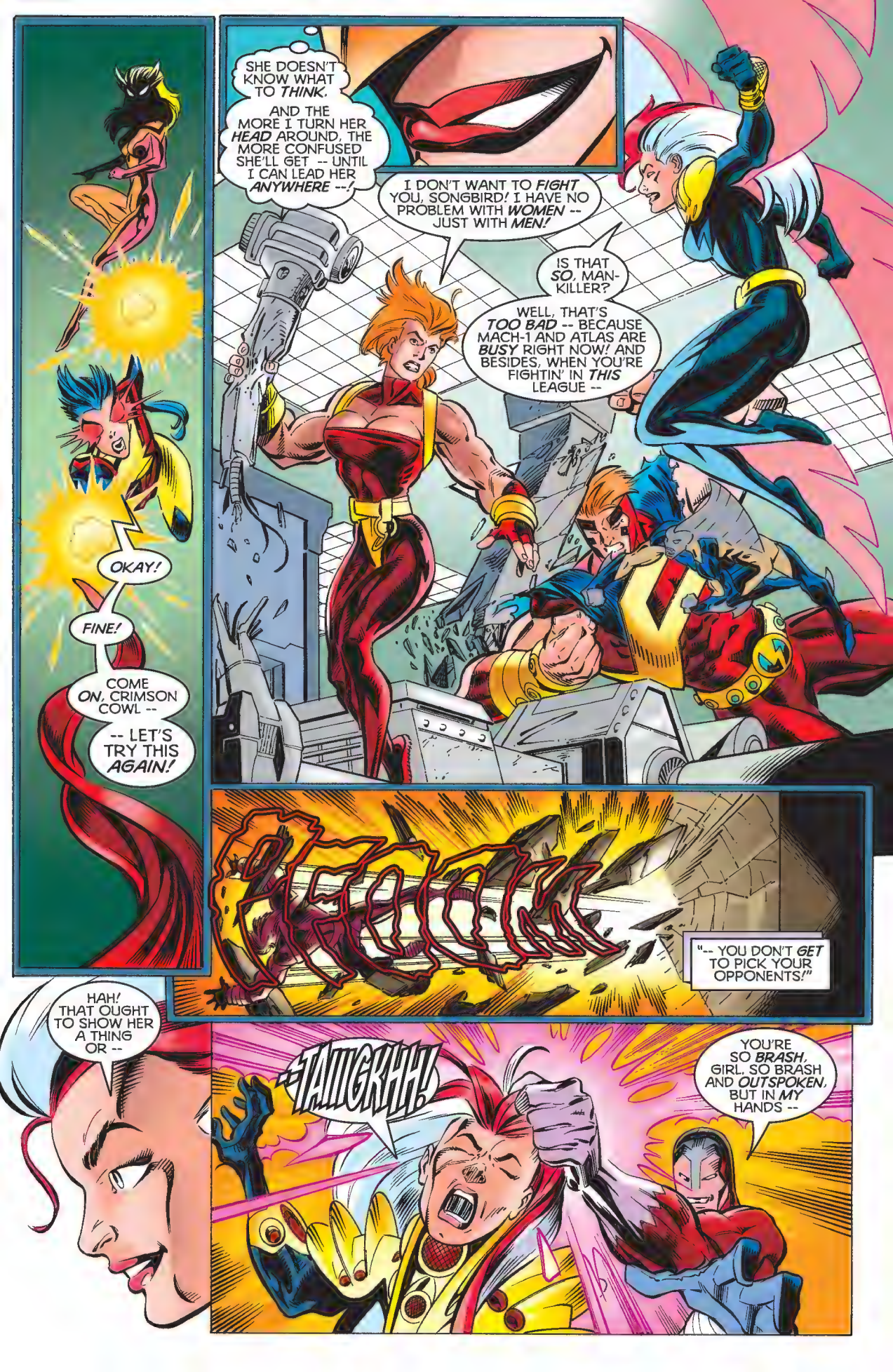

MOONSTONE
I DON'T LIKE THIS. ATLAS AND MACH-1 BOTH TOOK THE INITIATIVE ON OUR LAST MISSION -- AND I WANT THIS TEAM FIRMLY UNDER MY THUMB.
I SALVAGED SOME OF IT, BY HIJACKING THEIR EMOTIONS -- "PROPOSING" THAT WE STRIKE BACK WHEN THEY ALL ALREADY WANTED TO --
-- BUT I'VE GOT TO DO MORE --
ATLAS
I CAN'T SCREW UP IN THERE. I'VE GOT TO BE A NEW ERIK JOSTEN FROM NOW ON -- GOT TO BE DEPENDABLE.
I'VE GOT TO BE STRONG -- BE THEIR BACK-BONE --
JOLT
I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THIS. I WAS GLAD AT FIRST WHEN THEY REJECTED THE MASTERS' OFFER -- DECIDED TO FIGHT BACK.
BUT THEY'RE DOING IT FOR REVENGE, NOT JUSTICE -- AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK ABOUT THAT --
MACH-1
I HOPE MY ARMOR HOLDS UP. IT'S BEEN DAMAGED SO BADLY IT'S PRACTICALLY HOLDING TOGETHER WITH BUBBLEGUM AND HAIRPINS --
-- AND I DON'T HAVE A CLUE HOW TO FIX IT FOR REAL. AND THEN THERE'S MELISSA -- SONGBIRD --
SONGBIRD
WE HAD THOSE GUYS BEAT -- THAT CHARCOAL, THE IMPERIAL FORCES! WE HAD THEM BEAT, AND THE MASTERS TOOK IT AWAY FROM US!
I WANT TO SLAM 'EM INTO THE MAT -- GRIND THEIR FACES INTO THE CANVAS --
AND --
KAYOED GUARDS -- A SILENCED ALARM SYSTEM -- THEY'RE HERE ALL RIGHT.
THIS WAY, MACH-1.

DEEPER INSIDE --
THIS IS GREAT! I SHOULD DO ALL MY BANKING THIS WAY!
INDEED, MAN-KILLER --
-- BUT DON'T TAKE ONLY PRINTED BILLS. WE WANT TO DESTROY THEIR RECORDS, MAKE IT HARDER TO TRACK THIS CASH --
-- AND TAKE PAPER PLATES AND INK AS WELL --
-- I'M SURE WE'LL BE ABLE TO REAP QUITE A WINDFALL SELLING THEM TO COUNTER-FEITERS.
ALREADY IN THE WORKS, COWL! YOU'RE SO CONCERNED ABOUT IT, FEEL FREE TO COME ON DOWN AND DO SOME OF THE WORK YOURSELF!
YEAH, COWL! YOU MIGHT AS WELL GET YOUR HANDS DIRTY --
Eh -- ?
-- SINCE YOU'RE GOING TO JAIL WITH THE REST OF YOUR MISERABLE LOSERS!
SURPRISED TO SEE US HERE, COWL?
MAN-KILLER MENTIONED "NEWLY-MINTED" CASH, COWL! SINCE YOU WOULDN'T BOTHER STEALING COINS --
-- THAT MEANT ONE OF THE TWO PLACES THAT PRINTS BILLS! THE BUREAU OF PRINTING AND ENGRAVING IN WASHINGTON -- OR HERE!
LOOKS LIKE WE GUESSED RIGHT!

IT LOOKS AS IF YOU DID INDEED. AND MAN-KILLER WILL HAVE TO BE MORE TIGHT-LIPPED IN THE FUTURE.
STILL, IT'S NICE TO KNOW YOU'VE MADE YOUR DECISION, EVEN IF I'M DISAPPOINTED THAT YOU MADE SUCH A FOOLISH ONE.
GATHER WHAT'S BEEN PACKED FOR REMOVAL SO FAR, MY MASTERS. WE'LL TELEPORT AWAY --
-- AND THEN LET THE THUNDERBOLTS' ENEMIES KNOW WHERE THEY CAN BE FOUND, AS PROMISED.
WHAT?! WE'RE GOING TO RUN FROM THEM? WHY NOT JUST MESS 'EM UP, INSTEAD?!
NO, MAN-KILLER. WE'RE BUSINESSPEOPLE, AND THERE IS NO PROFIT IN -- eh?!
TOO BAD, COWL --
-- BUT IT LOOKS LIKE TONIGHT'S YOUR NIGHT FOR SURPRISES!
KLAK
WH -- AIGGHH!
WE FIGURED YOUR TELEPORTING ABILITIES WERE PROBABLY DUE TO SOME SORT OF CIRCUITRY IN YOUR CLOAK --
-- AND THAT WITH A BIG ENOUGH BIO-ELECTRIC JOLT --
-- YOU WOULDN'T BE GOING ANYWHERE!
WHMP
COWL? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I AM... INTACT, KLAW. ONLY MY DIGNITY IS INJURED. BUT THE BRAT IS RIGHT -- MY TELEPORT-CIRCUITS HAVE BEEN OVER-LOADED.
SO I RESCIND MY EARLIER COMMANDS, MASTER OF EVIL --
-- KILL THEM!

AND WITH THAT --
WHATEVER YOU SAY, BOSS!
-- THE BATTLE IS JOINED.
SURE YOU WANT TO MIX IT UP WITH ME, BABE? YOU'LL GO DOWN AS EASY AS YOU DID THE FIRST TIME!@
YOU MEAN THE TIME WE MADE YOU TURN TAIL AND RUN, TIGER SHARK? YES, I'M SURE YOU'RE VERY PROUD OF THAT ENCOUNTER!
@ THE T-BOLTS AND THE MASTERS FIRST CLASHED IN#3 – Tom.
HGKK!
CAN'T HURT ME THAT WAY, CYCLONE -- JUST MAKE ME MAD!
Ah, BUT I WEEL HAVE ALL ZE TIME IN ZE WORLD TO FIND A WAY TO 'URT YOU, ATLAS --
-- SINCE AS BEFORE, MY SPEED WEEL LEAVE YOU UNABLE TO LAY A 'AND ON ME!
YEAH, YOU'RE REAL SOLD ON YOUR SPEED, FRENCHIE --
CH KK
-- SO WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HIT YOU WITH SOMETHING THAT'S TOO BIG TO DODGE --?
SHRAKK
GHUFF--!
YOU CALL THAT FLYIN', MACH-1?

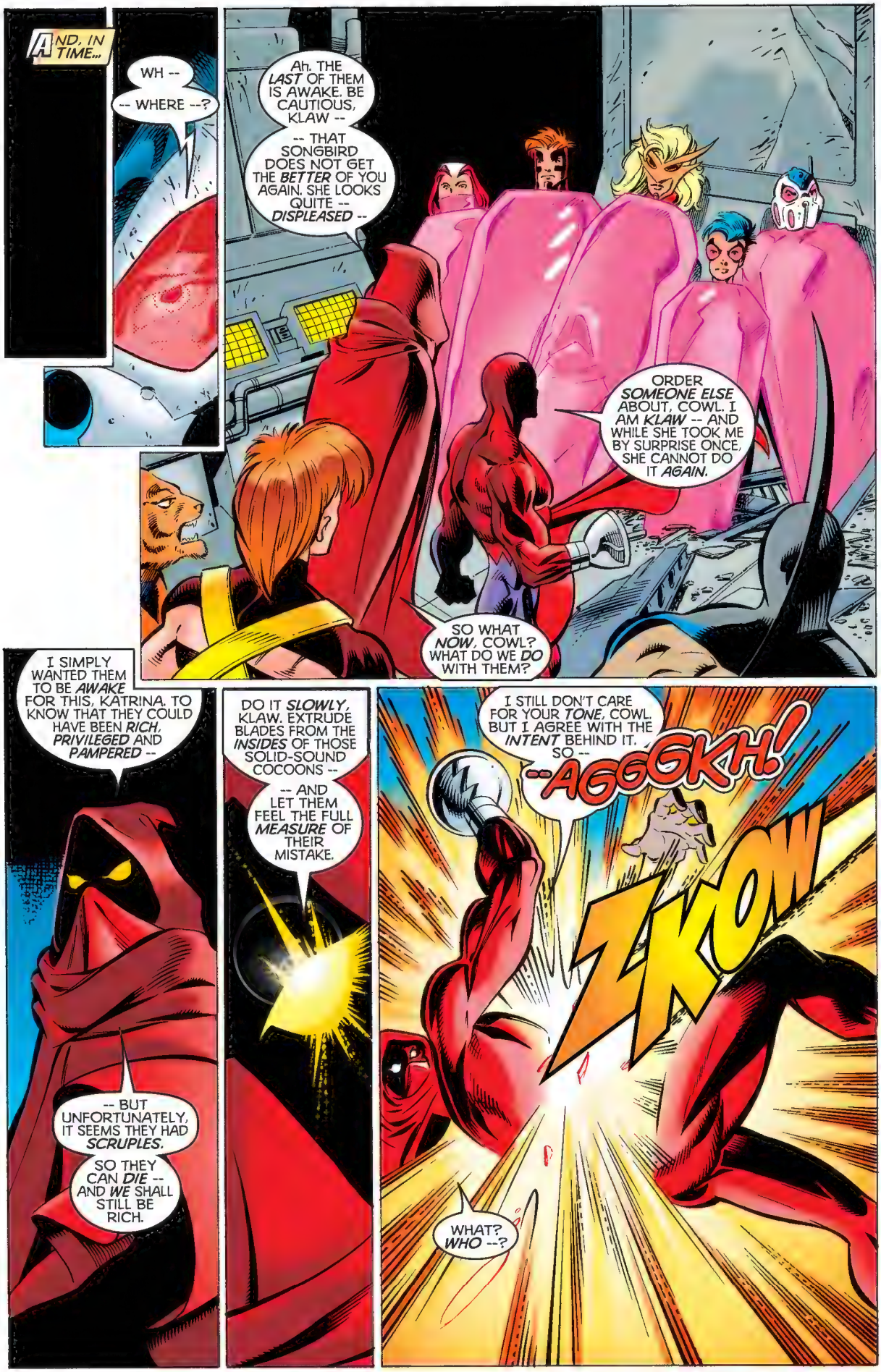
AND AS THE MELEE RAGES INSIDE --
-- OUTSIDE, A CLOAKED FIGURE COCKS ITS HEAD, LISTENING TO THE CLAMOR WITHIN -- COCKS ITS HEAD, PAUSES, AND NODS DECISIVELY --
-- AND GLIDES SILENTLY TO AN ENTRANCE, MAKING ITS WAY STEALTHILY INSIDE --
WHAT, AGAIN WITH THE FLYBOY ATTITUDE, FLYING TIGER? IT'S NOT LIKE YOU COULD BE ONE OF THE REAL WORLD WAR II FLYING TIGERS --
-- NOT UNLESS YOU'RE LIKE EIGHTY YEARS OLD!
AND WHO SAYS I AIN'T?
I'VE SEEN AND DONE THINGS YOU CAN ONLY IMAGINE, PUNK. AND IF YOU THINK THAT BEAT-UP SUIT YOU WEAR MAKES YOU MY EQUAL --
-- WELL, IT'S YOUR FUNERAL!
NEARBY...
WHOA!
GOT THE CAPE WORKING AGAIN, Huh? WELL, SORRY TO DISAPPOINT -- BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN THAT TO TAG ME!
WE SHALL SEE ABOUT THAT, YOUNGSTER!
JUST COME A FEW FEET CLOSER, AND --
WHUHH!
JOLT -- WATCH YOUR BACK! SHE WAS ABOUT TO IMPALE YOU!
HEY! COME BACK HERE!
YOU'RE BEING TOO TIMID, JOLT -- TOO DEFENSIVE! SHE ALMOST HAD YOU!
BUT --
BUT NOTHING! YOU'RE ANGRY, I KNOW -- AT THE MASTERS, AT THE T-BOLTS FOR NOT BEING AS HEROIC AS YOU'D LIKE! USE THAT ANGER -- LET IT OUT!
IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE IT COMES FROM -- JUST LET IT FUEL YOU!


SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT TO *THINK*.
AND THE MORE I TURN HER *HEAD* AROUND, THE MORE CONFUSED SHE'LL GET -- UNTIL I CAN LEAD HER *ANYWHERE* --!
I DON'T WANT TO *FIGHT* YOU, SONGBIRD! I HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH *WOMEN* -- JUST WITH *MEN!*
IS THAT *SO*, MAN-KILLER?
WELL, THAT'S *TOO BAD* -- BECAUSE MACH-1 AND ATLAS ARE *BUSY* RIGHT NOW! AND BESIDES, WHEN YOU'RE FIGHTIN' IN *THIS* LEAGUE --
OKAY!
FINE!
COME *ON*, CRIMSON COWL --
-- LET'S TRY THIS *AGAIN!*
"-- YOU DON'T *GET* TO PICK YOUR OPPONENTS!"
HAH! THAT OUGHT TO SHOW HER A THING OR --
TAIIIGRHH!
YOU'RE SO *BRASH*, GIRL, SO BRASH AND *OUTSPOKEN*, BUT IN *MY* HANDS --

-- SO HELPLESS! YOU STOLE MY SOUND-TECHNOLOGY, SONGBIRD! I WARNED YOU ABOUT THAT ONCE -- BUT NOW I'LL JUST DRAIN THE SONIC ENERGY FROM YOU --
-- DRAIN YOUR LIFE AWAY!
HGKK --!
YOU -- TRIED THIS BEFORE, KLAW -- AND I COULDN'T -- STOP YOU! BUT IT'S -- SAME TECHNOLOGY -- LIKE YOU SAID --
AND THAT -- JUST MAKES IT -- MATTER OF TOUGHNESS -- OF WHO'S GOT MORE --
-- AND BABY, WHEN YOU'VE LIVED THE KIND OF LIFE LITTLE MIMI HAS --
-- THERE AIN'T NOBODY TOUGHER!
GHUKKK!
NOBODY!
Uh-Oh! MELISSA'S SHOUTING ABOUT "MIMI" AGAIN -- HER CODENAME BACK FROM HER DAYS WITH THE GRAPPLERS!
I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK SHE'S HIDING SOMEHOW -- HIDING BEHIND MIMI --
NOT -- NOT ZE FACE --
-- AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT BOTHERS ME MORE -- THE FACT THAT "MIMI" HAS SO LITTLE USE FOR ME --
"-- OR THAT SHE'S SO BRUTAL!"
YOU LIKE THAT, KLAW? YOU LIKE THAT?! YOU TRIED TO DRAIN MY SONIC ENERGY --
-- BUT YOUR WHOLE BODY'S SOLID SOUND-ENERGY! SO LET'S JUST SEE WHAT I CAN DO TO YOU!

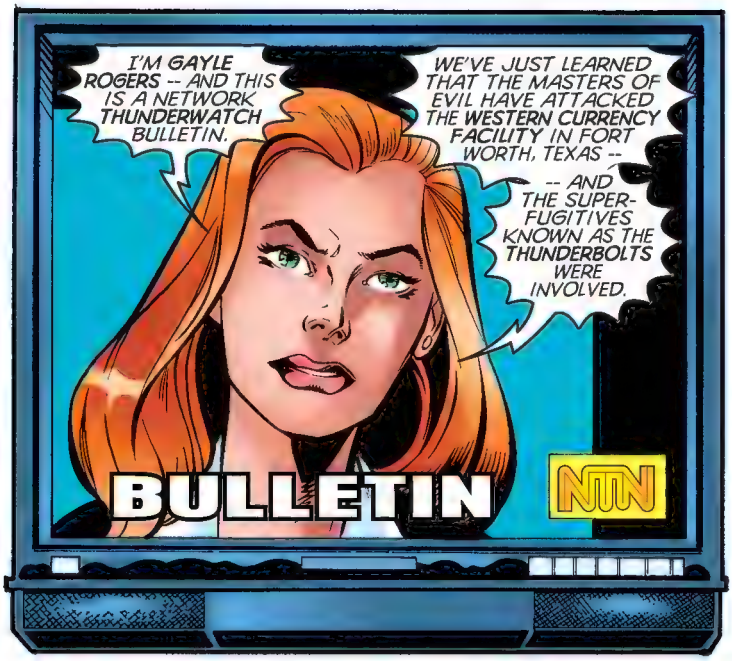
WE'RE WINNING!
WRAK
THE OTHERS HAVEN'T REALIZED IT YET -- THEY'RE TOO WRAPPED UP IN THEIR OWN BATTLES!
SO IF I "RALLY" THEM -- DELIVER THE COMMANDS THAT WRAP THIS UP -- I'LL GET THE CREDIT! I'LL HAVE "LED" THEM TO VICTORY!
POW
ZZAK
THUNDERBOLTS! FORM UP ON ME! ONE LAST PUSH -- AND WE CAN PUT THEM DOWN FOR GOOD!
BUT --
H-Huh --? MOONSTONE?
BKAM
ONE MOMENT'S HESITATION WAS ALL IT TOOK. ONE MOMENT'S DISTRACTION, AND --
NO MORE! NO MORE!
KLAW! THE THUNDERBOLTS -- THEY'RE ALL GROUPED TOGETHER! STRIKE NOW -- AND YOU'LL GET THEM ALL! STRIKE -- I ORDER YOU!
HAVE -- HAVE A CARE, CRIMSON COWL --

YOUR CONDESCENSION GROWS EVER MORE ANNOYING! ULYSSES KLAW IS NO MAN'S -- OR WOMAN'S -- LACKEY --
-- AND HIS POWER --
-- IS HIS OWN!
WARLAW!
THERE. IT IS DONE.
AND TAKE NOTE, COWL -- OF JUST WHO ACHIEVED THIS VICTORY.
ONE MOMENT'S DISTRACTION. ONE MOMENT'S HESITATION.
THAT'S ALL IT TOOK.


AND, IN TIME...
WH --
-- WHERE --?
Ah. THE LAST OF THEM IS AWAKE. BE CAUTIOUS, KLAW --
-- THAT SONGBIRD DOES NOT GET THE BETTER OF YOU AGAIN. SHE LOOKS QUITE -- DISPLEASED --
ORDER SOMEONE ELSE ABOUT, COWL. I AM KLAW -- AND WHILE SHE TOOK ME BY SURPRISE ONCE, SHE CANNOT DO IT AGAIN.
SO WHAT NOW, COWL? WHAT DO WE DO WITH THEM?
I SIMPLY WANTED THEM TO BE AWAKE FOR THIS, KATRINA. TO KNOW THAT THEY COULD HAVE BEEN RICH, PRIVILEGED AND PAMPERED --
-- BUT UNFORTUNATELY, IT SEEMS THEY HAD SCRUPLES.
SO THEY CAN DIE -- AND WE SHALL STILL BE RICH.
DO IT SLOWLY, KLAW. EXTRUDE BLADES FROM THE INSIDES OF THOSE SOLID-SOUND COCOONS --
-- AND LET THEM FEEL THE FULL MEASURE OF THEIR MISTAKE.
I STILL DON'T CARE FOR YOUR TONE, COWL. BUT I AGREE WITH THE INTENT BEHIND IT. SO --
--AGGGKH!
ZKOW
WHAT? WHO --?

I, CRIMSON COWL!
I HAVE WITNESSED YOUR ACTIONS -- AND HEARD YOUR PLANS! AND I TELL YOU THIS: THE THUNDERBOLTS, NOW AND FOREVER --
-- ARE UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE DEADLY, DANGEROUS DREADKNIGHT!
AND THE DREADKNIGHT IS *NOT* A MAN YOU WOULD BE WISE TO *CROSS!*
WITH THE FELLING OF *KLAW*, THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE *FREE* OF THEIR VILE PRISONS -- BUT SHOULD YOU CHOOSE TO *FACE* THEM AGAIN --
-- KNOW THAT THE DREADKNIGHT BATTLES *ALONGSIDE* THEM!
Huh?
WHAT?
WHO *IS* THIS GUY --?
PFAUGH! WE BEAT THEM BEFORE --
-- AN' WE'LL DO IT *AGAIN!* THAT COMIC-OPERA CLOWN WON'T *STOP* US! JUST SAY THE *WORD*, COWL!
YES! SAY ZE WORD -- AN' WE WEEL *CRUSH* ZEM!
I -- THEY --
-- *YES!* WE'LL KILL THEM ALL, AND --

WEOWEOWEOW


I'M GAYLE ROGERS -- AND THIS IS A NETWORK THUNDERWATCH BULLETIN.
WE'VE JUST LEARNED THAT THE MASTERS OF EVIL HAVE ATTACKED THE WESTERN CURRENCY FACILITY IN FORT WORTH, TEXAS --
-- AND THE SUPER-FUGITIVES KNOWN AS THE THUNDERBOLTS WERE INVOLVED.
BULLETIN
NTN

THE ATTACKERS WERE NOT BARON ZEMO'S MASTERS OF EVIL, HOWEVER -- BUT A COMPARATIVELY NEW GROUP, LED BY THE NEW CRIMSON COWL.
AS FOR THE THUNDERBOLTS' INVOLVEMENT, LITTLE IS KNOWN AT THIS POINT.

WERE THEY AIDING THE MASTERS? OR OPPOSING THEM? REPORTS ARE CONTRADICTORY.
I HAVE HERE IN THE STUDIO Dr. DENNIS SCHOOLCRAFT, AUTHOR OF THE EMPIRE BOOKS BESTSELLER SHADOWS: THE DARK SIDE OF THE MARVELS.
DOCTOR, RUMORS HAVE REACHED US THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS MAY HAVE REFORMED -- MAY BE ACTING AS HEROES FOR REAL. IS THIS POSSIBLE?
IN A WORD, GAYLE -- NO. THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES OF SUPER-VILLAINS REFORMING -- HAWKEYE, THE SUB-MARINER, THE SCARLET WITCH --
-- BUT THEY HAVE BEEN FEW AND FAR BETWEEN, AND ALWAYS DUE TO UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

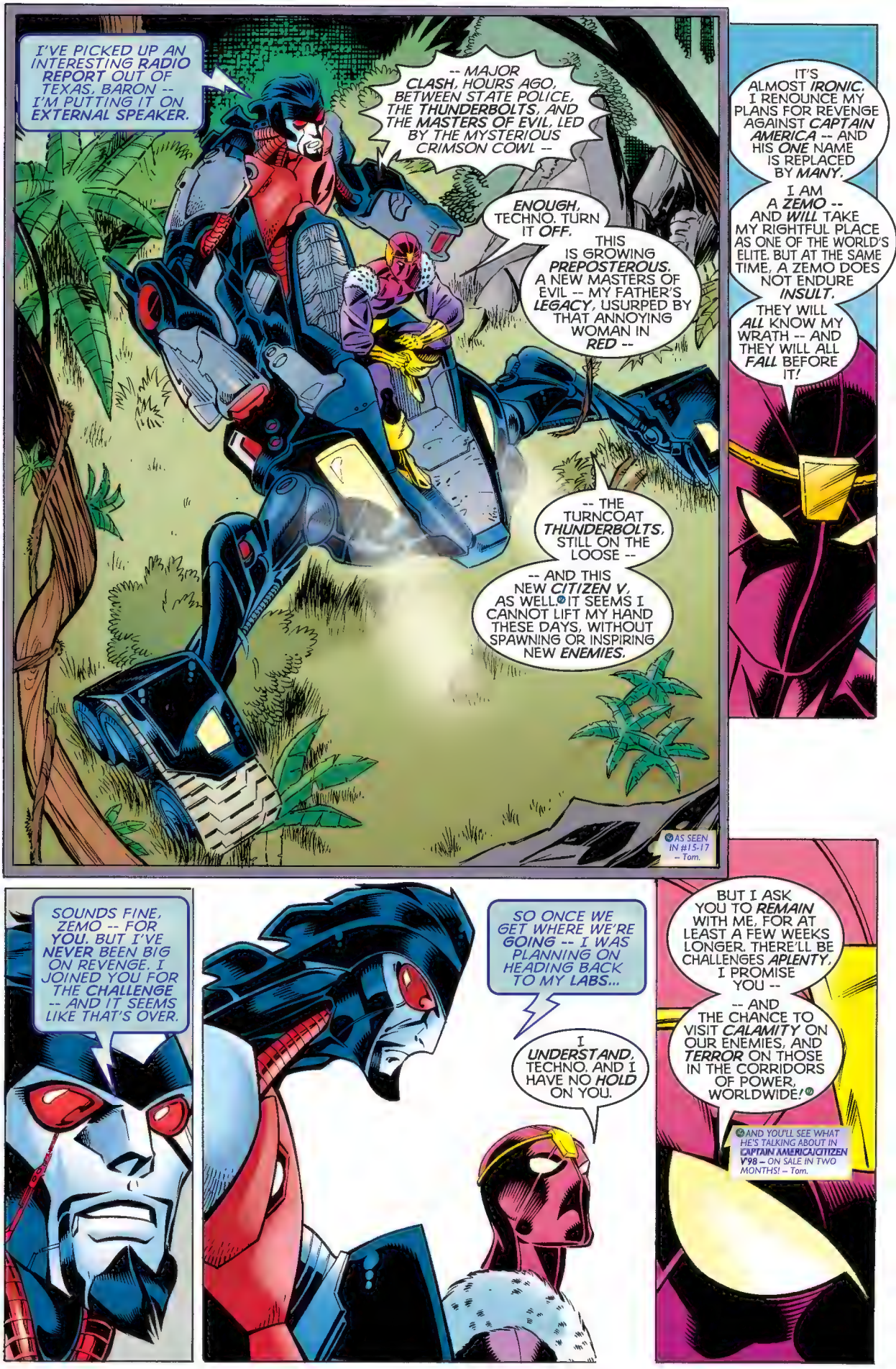
BUT THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE CAREER SUPER-VILLAINS -- CONFIRMED SOCIOPATHS, WITH A LONG HISTORY OF CRIME-FOR-PROFIT.
THEY DO NOTHING WITHOUT A PLAN. MARK MY WORDS -- THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING --
"-- AND THEY KNOW EXACTLY WHAT THEY'RE DOING --!"
BLAST IT -- THIS WASN'T THE PLAN!

THEY SHOULD'VE CAUGHT THE MASTERS!
IF SONGBIRD COULD'VE --
HEY, DON'T BLAME ME, KARLA -- THIS WAS YOUR PLAN! AND I WAS DOING FINE 'TIL YOU RATTLED ME!
LET'S JUST CONCENTRATE ON GETTING OUT OF HERE, FOLKS!
BUT DON'T HURT ANYONE -- JUST MAKE 'EM BACK OFF!
THEY'RE COPS -- THEY'RE JUST DOING THEIR JOBS!
Ah -- IS THIS SOMETHING YOU PEOPLE DO OFTEN?

WE'RE GETTING USED TO IT, AT ANY RATE. SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY, DREADKNIGHT -- WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
MY STORY?
I FEAR MY STORY IS NOT ALL THAT UNFAMILIAR, YOUNG JOLT.
ONCE, I WAS MERELY A GIFTED SCIENTIST -- ENSLAVED TO THE SERVICE OF THE LATVERIAN MONARCH Dr. DOOM.
BUT HE WAS MAD WITH POWER, AND I WAS FOOLISH ENOUGH TO REBEL --
-- AND I LOST. AND AS PUNISHMENT, HE FUSED THIS MASK PERMANENTLY TO MY FACE, AND LEFT ME TO DIE.
I NEVER INTENDED TO BE A CRIMINAL -- BUT WITH MY HIDEOUS APPEARANCE, AND THE ENEMY I MADE, I FELT I HAD NO CHOICE.
SO I LIVED THIS LIFE, AND I HATED IT --
-- AND THEN I HEARD OF YOU THUNDERBOLTS, AND HOW YOU'D APPARENTLY REFORMED, AND WERE PROVING YOURSELVES TO THE WORLD.
I FOUND YOU TONIGHT, AND I FOLLOWED YOU -- TO SEE IF THE RUMOR WAS TRUE. AND IF IT WAS, TO SEE IF I COULD JOIN YOU.

THE WHOLE STORY'S IN IRON MAN Vol.1#102 --Tom

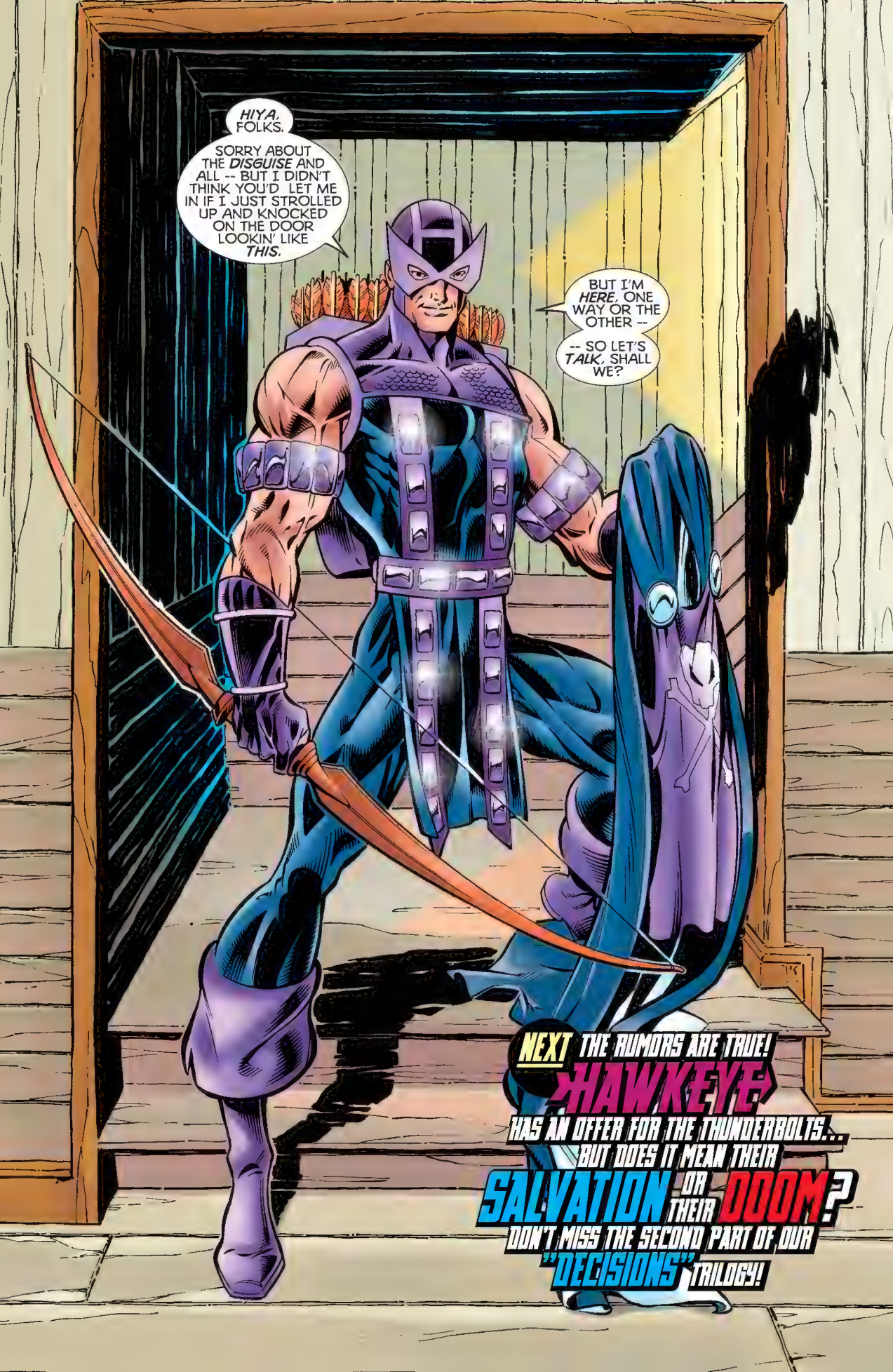
YOU WANT TO JOIN *US?* A BUNCH OF FUGITIVES ON THE RUN FROM THE *LAW?*
YEAH, *THAT* MAKES SENSE.
Uh, LOOK -- IF YOU *ARE* THE DREADKNIGHT, I'VE READ ABOUT YOU. BUT I THOUGHT YOU HAD A *BLACK, WINGED HORSE.*
THIS IS AN *"ATOMIC STEED,"* ISN'T IT? LIKE THE *BLACK KNIGHT* USED TO USE?
WHY, Ah, -- *YES.* THE BLACK KNIGHT DID *INDEED* RIDE ONE OF THESE --
-- AS DID THE *KNIGHTS OF WUNDAGORE,* AND SINCE THE KNIGHT ONCE STOLE MY BATWINGED STALLION *VALINOR* --
-- I THOUGHT IT ONLY JUST TO APPROPRIATE *HIS* STEED, AND SO I OBTAINED ONE FROM THE BOWELS OF *WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN.*
YOU ARE *RIGHT* TO BE SUSPICIOUS OF ME, FOR I COME AMONG YOU MASKED AND UNINVITED. BUT I ASSURE YOU, MY MOTIVES ARE *GOOD* --
-- AND I WILL DO *WHATE'ER* IT TAKES TO DEMONSTRATE THAT!
WELL, HE *SOUNDS* GENUINE -- I NEVER KNEW THAT THE BLACK KNIGHT SWIPED HIS *HORSE,* BUT EVERYTHING *ELSE* HE SAID FITS WHAT I KNOW.
AND HE *DID* SAVE OUR BACON BACK THERE...
CENTRAL AMERICA.
THE TROPICAL JUNGLE IS HOT, DAMP AND SO DENSELY FORESTED AS TO BE UTTERLY IMPASSABLE.
OR, AT LEAST, IMPASSABLE --
SCRNCH
-- TO ALL BUT A VERY FEW.


I'VE PICKED UP AN INTERESTING RADIO REPORT OUT OF TEXAS, BARON -- I'M PUTTING IT ON EXTERNAL SPEAKER.
-- MAJOR CLASH, HOURS AGO, BETWEEN STATE POLICE, THE THUNDERBOLTS, AND THE MASTERS OF EVIL, LED BY THE MYSTERIOUS CRIMSON COWL --
ENOUGH, TECHNO. TURN IT OFF.
THIS IS GROWING PREPOSTEROUS. A NEW MASTERS OF EVIL -- MY FATHER'S LEGACY, USURPED BY THAT ANNOYING WOMAN IN RED --
-- THE TURNCOAT THUNDERBOLTS, STILL ON THE LOOSE --
-- AND THIS NEW CITIZEN V, AS WELL? IT SEEMS I CANNOT LIFT MY HAND THESE DAYS, WITHOUT SPAWNING OR INSPIRING NEW ENEMIES.
AS SEEN IN #15-17 -- Tom.
IT'S ALMOST IRONIC. I RENOUNCE MY PLANS FOR REVENGE AGAINST CAPTAIN AMERICA -- AND HIS ONE NAME IS REPLACED BY MANY.
I AM A ZEMO -- AND WILL TAKE MY RIGHTFUL PLACE AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S ELITE. BUT AT THE SAME TIME, A ZEMO DOES NOT ENDURE INSULT.
THEY WILL ALL KNOW MY WRATH -- AND THEY WILL ALL FALL BEFORE IT!
SOUNDS FINE, ZEMO -- FOR YOU. BUT I'VE NEVER BEEN BIG ON REVENGE. I JOINED YOU FOR THE CHALLENGE -- AND IT SEEMS LIKE THAT'S OVER.
SO ONCE WE GET WHERE WE'RE GOING -- I WAS PLANNING ON HEADING BACK TO MY LABS...
I UNDERSTAND, TECHNO. AND I HAVE NO HOLD ON YOU.
BUT I ASK YOU TO REMAIN WITH ME, FOR AT LEAST A FEW WEEKS LONGER. THERE'LL BE CHALLENGES APLENTY, I PROMISE YOU --
-- AND THE CHANCE TO VISIT CALAMITY ON OUR ENEMIES, AND TERROR ON THOSE IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER, WORLDWIDE!
AND YOU'LL SEE WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT IN CAPTAIN AMERICA/CITIZEN V '98 – ON SALE IN TWO MONTHS! -- Tom.

MEANWHILE, THE HELICOPTERS HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND --
-- AND THE THUNDERBOLTS HAVE RETURNED TO THEIR BASE.
THEIR VISITOR HAS BEEN SHOWN TO AN UNOCCUPIED ATTIC ROOM, AND LEFT TO REST -- TO SLEEP, IF HE CHOOSES TO. BUT HE DOESN'T SLEEP.
HE HEARS VOICES FROM THE LEVEL BELOW. MUFFLED VOICES, AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO HEAR MUCH OF WHAT THEY ARE SAYING.
-- LOOK, WE CAN DEBATE LETTING THE DREADKNIGHT IN UNTIL THE SUN COMES UP, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING WE NEED TO SETTLE BEFORE THAT.
I DON'T LIKE SAYING THIS, BUT IT'S GOT TO BE SAID. THIS TEAM NEEDS AN EFFECTIVE, CAPABLE LEADER -- AND MOONSTONE'S JUST NOT CUTTING IT.
WE'VE GOT TO PICK SOMEONE ELSE.
WHAT --?
Huh?
THEY TALK ABOUT HIM, AS HE EXPECTED. BUT THEY TALK ABOUT MORE, AS WELL --
I SEE. AND ARE YOU NOMINATING YOURSELF FOR THE POSITION, ABNER?
NO -- I LED THE SINISTER SYNDICATE, AND A GANG HERE AND THERE, BUT I WAS DESPERATE, JUST LOOKING FOR ANYTHING THAT MIGHT WORK OUT.
I HATED EVERY SECOND OF IT, AND WASN'T THAT GOOD AT IT ANYWAY.
I WAS THINKING OF ERIK -- HE'S GOT MILITARY TRAINING, AND THE PLAN HE SUGGESTED IN BURTON CANYON WAS A GOOD ONE...
ME?

Uh, LOOK, ABE, I'M FLATTERED AN' ALL -- BUT I'M NO LEADER.
I'M A GRUNT. I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN, AN' I ALWAYS WILL BE. I COULD MAYBE MAKE SUGGESTIONS, BUT I'M NOT UP TO THE JOB FULL-TIME.
IF WE WERE GONNA HAVE A NEW LEADER, I'D SAY LET JOLT DO IT. SHE KNOWS WHAT'S RIGHT -- MORE'N ANY OF US.
JOLT? NO OFFENSE MEANT, I DON'T THINK THAT'D BE A GOOD IDEA.
YOU'VE GOT HEART, HALLIE, AND AN AMAZING AMOUNT OF TALENT -- BUT YOU JUST DON'T HAVE ENOUGH EXPERIENCE. MAYBE SOMEDAY, BUT --
BUT NOT SOON, RIGHT?
BELIEVE ME, THERE'S NO OFFENSE TAKEN. I AGREE WITH YOU -- I'M JUST A KID, AND --
WELL, DON'T LOOK AT ME!
I'M NO LEADER -- NOT NOW, NOT SOMEDAY, NOT EVER! I LOOK OUT FOR MYSELF -- I CAN'T MOTHER-HEN OTHERS LIKE YOU DO, ABE.
BESIDES, WE'RE DOING OKAY -- I DON'T SEE ANY REASON TO CHANGE.
AND THAT SPINS THE BOTTLE BACK AROUND TO ME AGAIN. BUT I'M NOT "CUTTING IT", ACCORDING TO ABE...
LOOK, KARLA -- I'M NOT TRYING TO START A FIGHT OR ANYTHING. AND I'LL ADMIT THAT IN A LOT OF WAYS, YOU'RE THE BEST CHOICE WE'VE GOT.
YOU'RE CERTAINLY A LOT SMARTER THAN ME -- OR ANY OF US. AND YOU'RE CHARISMATIC, AND YOU'VE GOT VISION --
-- BUT AT THE SAME TIME, YOU'RE SLOPPY, LIKE TONIGHT AGAINST THE MASTERS. WE SHOULD'VE HAD A BACKUP PLAN, IN CASE THEY BOLTED.
AND FOR ALL YOUR BRAINS, YOU'RE SHORT-SIGHTED. YOU LOOK FOR THE EASIEST ANSWER. EVEN IF IT ISN'T THE RIGHT ONE.

LIKE OUR BATTLE AGAINST GRAVITON -- YOU SAVED OUR LIVES, AND GOT HIM TO LEAVE, BUT YOU DIDN'T EXACTLY LEAD US TO VICTORY.
LETTING HIM GO LIKE THAT -- IT DIDN'T DO OUR MESSAGE ANY GOOD.
I... SEE.
IN #17 – Tom.
AND THEN THERE'S KOSMOS -- I SEE IT IN HIS EYES. I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO -- SO HE THINKS I'LL BETRAY THE TEAM, IF PUSH COMES TO SHOVE.
AND HE'S RIGHT. BUT I WANT THIS TEAM. SONGBIRD'LL BACK ME -- AND SO WILL JOLT, IF SHE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO THINK TOO MUCH --
IT LOOKS LIKE A CHOICE, THEN -- BETWEEN YOU AND ME.
SHE BETRAYED AND MURDERED THE KOSMOSIAN RULER IN #14, TO GET HOME – Tom
WELL, I STILL DON'T WANT TO DO IT -- BUT IF I'M THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE, THEN --
-- Huh?
TUNK
TUNK
DREADKNIGHT'S MASK!
TUNK
BUT -- BUT IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE FUSED TO HIS FACE --


HIYA, FOLKS.
SORRY ABOUT THE *DISGUISE* AND ALL -- BUT I DIDN'T THINK YOU'D LET ME IN IF I JUST STROLLED UP AND KNOCKED ON THE DOOR LOOKIN' LIKE *THIS*.
BUT I'M *HERE*, ONE WAY OR THE OTHER --
-- SO LET'S *TALK*, SHALL WE?
NEXT THE RUMORS ARE TRUE!
HAWKEYE
HAS AN OFFER FOR THE THUNDERBOLTS...
BUT DOES IT MEAN THEIR
SALVATION OR THEIR DOOM?
DON'T MISS THE SECOND PART OF OUR
"DECISIONS" TRILOGY!

MARVEL COMICS
DEC
#21
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
FAN AWARD 1998 WINNER WIZARD
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
Hey, look! It's HAWKEYE!
1998 WIZARD FAN AWARD WINNER
FAVORITE WRITER
KURT BUSIEK
COMICS' GREATEST MOMENT—1997
THUNDERBOLTS REVEALED AS THE MASTERS OF EVIL, THUNDERBOLTS #1
SONGBIRD: BERSERK!
BUSIEK • BAGLEY • HANNA

DECISIONS PART 2: TRUST

BY HURT BUSIEK & MARK BAGLEY

SCOTT HANNA INKER

MELISSA JOAN GOLD, A.K.A. SONGBIRD, SCREAMS --

-- AND HER CYBERNETICALLY-ALTERED VOCAL CORDS TRANSMIT THE VIBRATIONS TO THE HI-TECH CARAPACE SHE WEARS AROUND HER THROAT --

-- AND ITS CIRCUITS AMPLIFY, AUGMENT AND TRANSFORM HER SCREAM, TURNING IT TO STEEL-HARD SOLID SOUND.

SHE'S HAD ENOUGH.

THE THUNDERBOLTS -- A BAND OF ONETIME CRIMINALS TRYING TO PROVE THEMSELVES AS SUPER HEROES -- HAVE BEEN THROUGH A LOT, LATELY --

-- SHANGHAIED TO ANOTHER DIMENSION, CHASED BY S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS AND SUPER-VILLAINS, VILIFIED BY THE PUBLIC --

-- AND SHE'S NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY MORE. WHAT THEY FACE NOW -- THIS FINAL INDIGNITY -- SHE'S JUST NOT GOING TO LET IT HAPPEN.

JOE ROSAS COLORS

LETTERS RS & COMICRAFT'S SIOBHAN HANNA

TOM BREVOORT EDITOR

BOB HARRAS CHIEF

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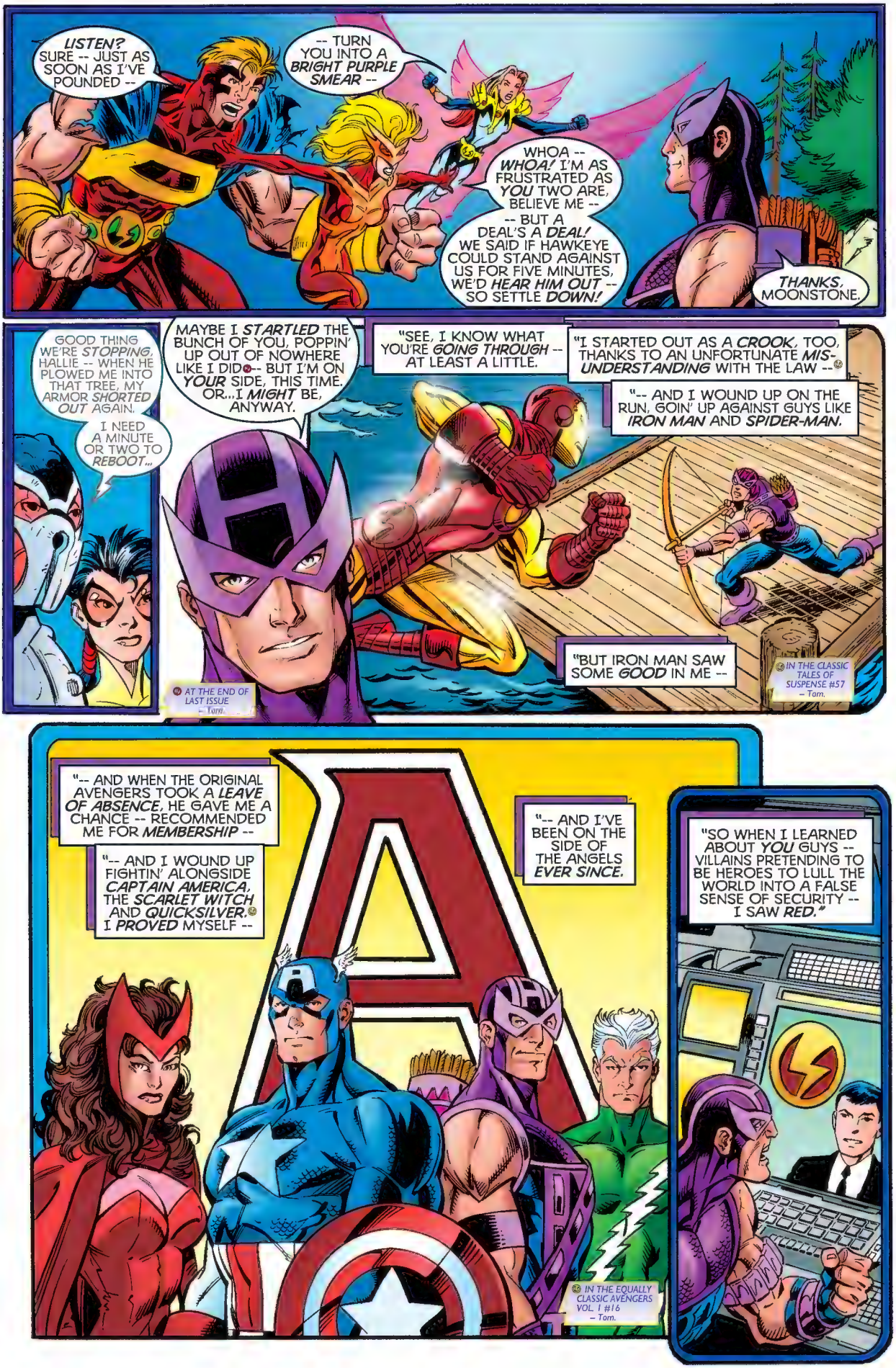
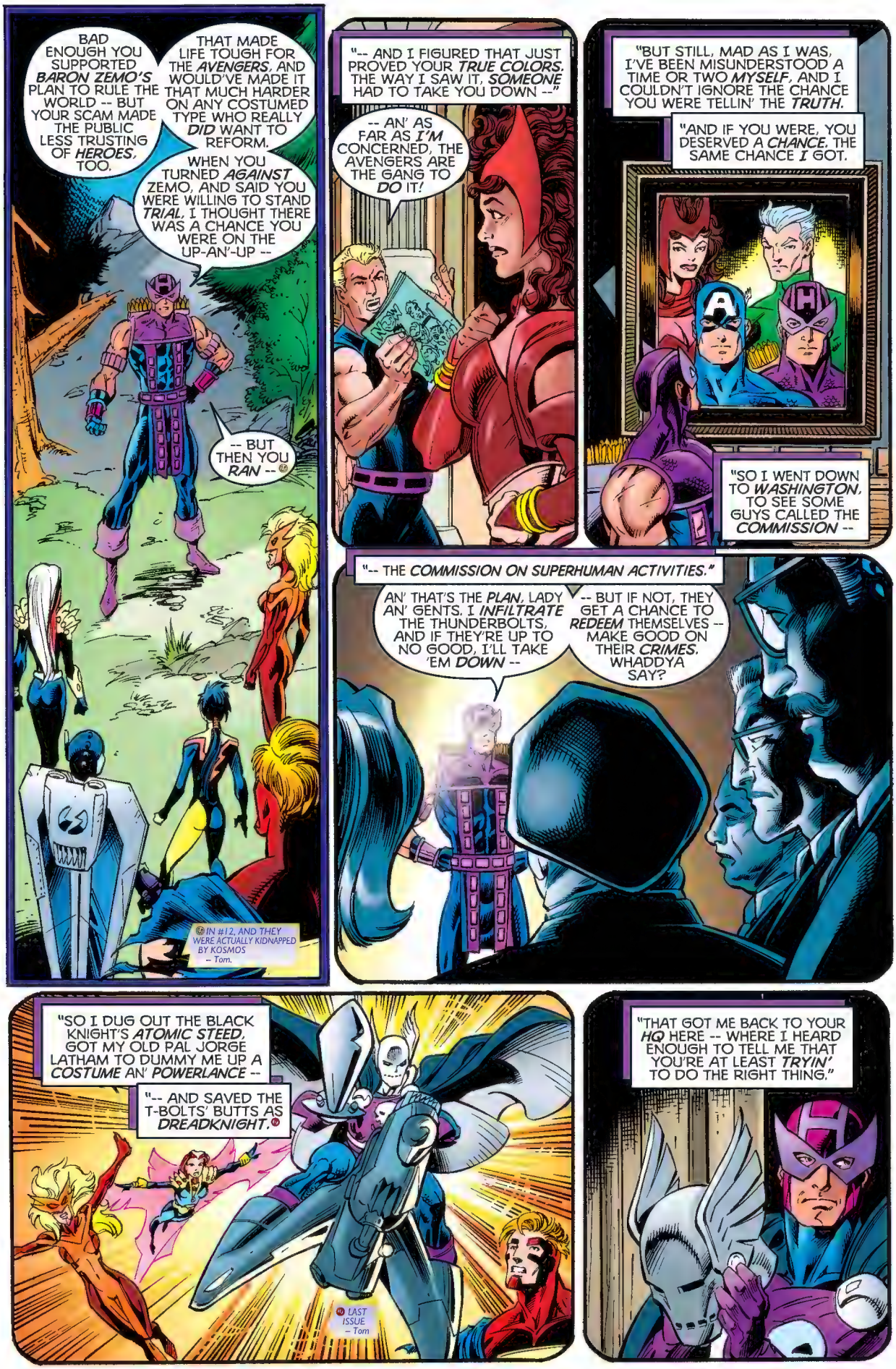
WAM
ZAK
BRAKKAK
HA!
BUT AS HER SOLID-SOUND SPHERE MATERIALIZES AROUND HER TARGET --
ATLAS, MACH-1 -- HOLD UP! DON'T --
A FOR ENTHUSIASM, GANG -- BUT YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT THE SUPER HERO GAME! FOR INSTANCE, LESSON ONE --
-- IF YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED, USE IT TO YOUR ADVANTAGE -- LET YOUR OPPONENTS GET IN EACH OTHER'S WAY!
SEE, BY DOING THAT, I SHIELD MYSELF FROM YOU, AND GET THE CHANCE --
-- TO POP OUT ONE OF MY COLLAPSIBLE SCREAMER ARROWS --
-- USE IT TO DISRUPT SONGBIRD'S LITTLE PRISON-SPHERE --
SHREE
"-- AND WHO KNOWS, MAYBE ZAP SONGBIRD HERSELF WITH THE FEEDBACK!"
THUS, I'M FREE AND CLEAR, AND ABLE TO SHOW YOU WHY I'M CALLED HAWKEYE!
HAWKEYE --
-- THE MARKSMAN!
THESE GUYS ARE GOOD -- REAL GOOD! WITH A LITTLE ORGANIZATION, THEY MIGHT'VE HAD ME!
BUT I CAN'T LET ON THAT I THINK SO -- GOTTA KEEP 'EM RATTLED, KEEP 'EM REACTING THE WAY I WANT THEM TO!

SPLTCH
MMF!
SO YOU BOUGHT YOURSELF A FEW SECONDS, SMART GUY!
YEAH! YOU'RE STILL ONLY HUMAN, HAWKEYE -- IF SONGBIRD'S SOUND-PODS DON'T TAKE YOU DOWN, MY RUBBER BULLETS WILL!
NH!
WHOM
YOW! CLOSE!
MAYBE SO, MACH-1! BUT IN THOSE "FEW SECONDS" I BOUGHT MYSELF, I TOOK THE OFFENSE AGAINST MOONSTONE AND ATLAS --
"-- NOT TO MENTION SONGBIRD!"
Huh? A NET-ARROW --?
ABE -- STOP! HE'S A HERO -- AN AVENGER! WE SHOULDN'T --
LESSON TWO -- KEEP MOVING, AND USE YOUR SURROUNDINGS! IT BEATS BEING IN THE SAME PLACE ALL THE TIME --
-- AND IT MAKES IT EASIER TO SET UP FOR LESSON THREE --
SHRSHH
-- WHEN YOU'RE OUTPOWERED, LOOK FOR WAYS TO USE YOUR OPPONENTS' POWERS AGAINST THEM!
H-HUH?

KRAMM!
UFF!
YOU STEER BY LINE-OF-SIGHT, DON'T YOU? YOUR JETS TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU POINT YOUR HEAD!
HEYY!
LOOKS LIKE IT! YOU CAN PROBABLY OVERRIDE THAT -- BUT NOT BEFORE I INTRODUCE YOU --
SKRAMM!
-- TO OUR FRIEND THE OAK TREE!
NOT BAD, AVENGER. BUT YOUR BLAST ARROW DIDN'T HURT ME -- AND THERE AIN'T MUCH ELSE YOU CAN DO TO ME!
LESSON FOUR, ATLAS -- DO YOUR HOMEWORK! YOUR BUDDY COMMUNING WITH NATURE OVER THERE USED GAS PELLETS ON THE WRECKING CREW --
-- AND IT STRIKES ME --
WAY BACK IN #1 – Tom.
"-- THAT THAT'S A TRICK THAT I CAN USE HERE!"
FLOOPH
HKK! HGAKKH!
OKAY, THAT DOES IT! YOU MAY BE AN AVENGER, BUT THIS IS MY TEAM YOU'RE MESSING WITH! I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU --
-- BUT I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU MAKE THEM LOOK LIKE DOPES --

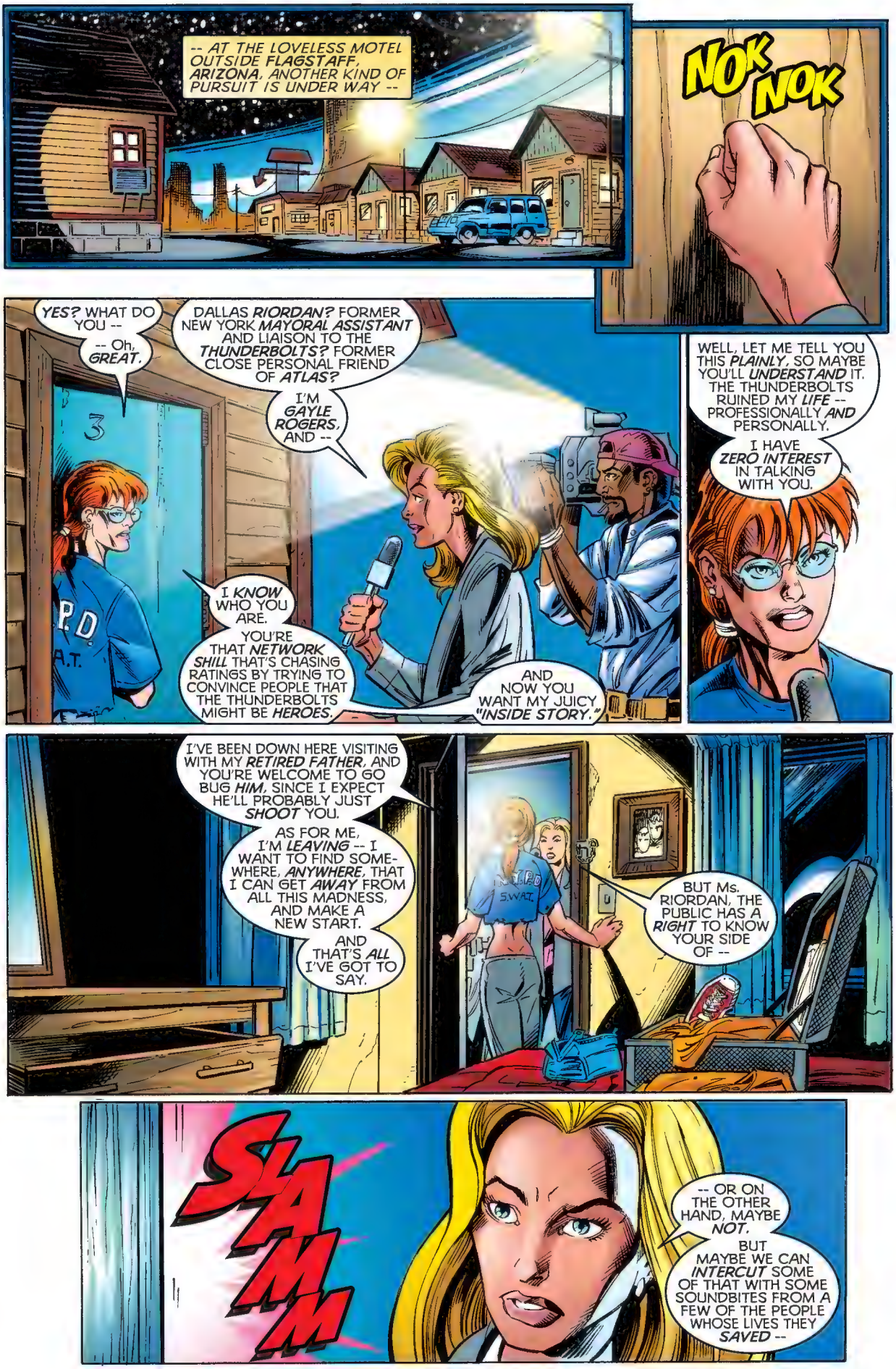
Ghuuhh! FREE!
NOW WHERE IS HE? WHERE IS THAT LITTLE --
-- AND I'M WAY TOO FAST FOR YOU TO TAG!
IS THAT SO, JOLT? WELL, FINE. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO HURT ME WITH THOSE BIO-ELECTRIC ZAPS OF YOURS --
WH --? Oh, NO.
"-- HURT MOONSTONE!"
Aah! SORRY!
AIKH!
I'M --
AAAAND... TIME OUT!
YOUR FIVE MINUTES ARE UP -- AND I'M STILL STANDING! SO...
-- GONNA --
-- KILL --
...YOU READY TO LISTEN?
-- HIM!
GEEZ -- ALL THAT, AND HE'S NOT EVEN WINDED --!


LISTEN? SURE -- JUST AS SOON AS I'VE POUNDED --
-- TURN YOU INTO A BRIGHT PURPLE SMEAR --
WHOA -- WHOA! I'M AS FRUSTRATED AS YOU TWO ARE, BELIEVE ME --
-- BUT A DEAL'S A DEAL! WE SAID IF HAWKEYE COULD STAND AGAINST US FOR FIVE MINUTES, WE'D HEAR HIM OUT -- SO SETTLE DOWN!
THANKS, MOONSTONE.
GOOD THING WE'RE STOPPING, HALLIE -- WHEN HE PLOWED ME INTO THAT TREE, MY ARMOR SHORTED OUT AGAIN.
I NEED A MINUTE OR TWO TO REBOOT...
MAYBE I STARTLED THE BUNCH OF YOU, POPPIN' UP OUT OF NOWHERE LIKE I DID -- BUT I'M ON YOUR SIDE, THIS TIME. OR...I MIGHT BE, ANYWAY.
AT THE END OF LAST ISSUE -- Tom.
"SEE, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH -- AT LEAST A LITTLE.
"I STARTED OUT AS A CROOK, TOO, THANKS TO AN UNFORTUNATE MIS-UNDERSTANDING WITH THE LAW --
"-- AND I WOUND UP ON THE RUN, GOIN' UP AGAINST GUYS LIKE IRON MAN AND SPIDER-MAN.
"BUT IRON MAN SAW SOME GOOD IN ME --
IN THE CLASSIC TALES OF SUSPENSE #57 -- Tom.
"-- AND WHEN THE ORIGINAL AVENGERS TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE, HE GAVE ME A CHANCE -- RECOMMENDED ME FOR MEMBERSHIP --
"-- AND I WOUND UP FIGHTIN' ALONGSIDE CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE SCARLET WITCH AND QUICKSILVER. I PROVED MYSELF --
"-- AND I'VE BEEN ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS EVER SINCE.
IN THE EQUALLY CLASSIC AVENGERS VOL. 1 #16 -- Tom.
"SO WHEN I LEARNED ABOUT YOU GUYS -- VILLAINS PRETENDING TO BE HEROES TO LULL THE WORLD INTO A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY -- I SAW RED."


BAD ENOUGH YOU SUPPORTED BARON ZEMO'S PLAN TO RULE THE WORLD -- BUT YOUR SCAM MADE THE PUBLIC LESS TRUSTING OF HEROES, TOO.
THAT MADE LIFE TOUGH FOR THE AVENGERS, AND WOULD'VE MADE IT THAT MUCH HARDER ON ANY COSTUMED TYPE WHO REALLY DID WANT TO REFORM.
WHEN YOU TURNED AGAINST ZEMO, AND SAID YOU WERE WILLING TO STAND TRIAL, I THOUGHT THERE WAS A CHANCE YOU WERE ON THE UP-AN'-UP --
-- BUT THEN YOU RAN --
IN #12, AND THEY WERE ACTUALLY KIDNAPPED BY KOSMOS -- Tom.
"-- AND I FIGURED THAT JUST PROVED YOUR TRUE COLORS. THE WAY I SAW IT, SOMEONE HAD TO TAKE YOU DOWN --"
-- AN' AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THE AVENGERS ARE THE GANG TO DO IT!
"BUT STILL, MAD AS I WAS, I'VE BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD A TIME OR TWO MYSELF, AND I COULDN'T IGNORE THE CHANCE YOU WERE TELLIN' THE TRUTH.
"AND IF YOU WERE, YOU DESERVED A CHANCE. THE SAME CHANCE I GOT.
"SO I WENT DOWN TO WASHINGTON, TO SEE SOME GUYS CALLED THE COMMISSION --
"-- THE COMMISSION ON SUPERHUMAN ACTIVITIES."
AN' THAT'S THE PLAN, LADY AN' GENTS. I INFILTRATE THE THUNDERBOLTS, AND IF THEY'RE UP TO NO GOOD, I'LL TAKE 'EM DOWN --
-- BUT IF NOT, THEY GET A CHANCE TO REDEEM THEMSELVES -- MAKE GOOD ON THEIR CRIMES. WHADDYA SAY?
"SO I DUG OUT THE BLACK KNIGHT'S ATOMIC STEED, GOT MY OLD PAL JORGE LATHAM TO DUMMY ME UP A COSTUME AN' POWERLANCE --
"-- AND SAVED THE T-BOLTS' BUTTS AS DREADKNIGHT.
LAST ISSUE -- Tom
"THAT GOT ME BACK TO YOUR HQ HERE -- WHERE I HEARD ENOUGH TO TELL ME THAT YOU'RE AT LEAST TRYIN' TO DO THE RIGHT THING."

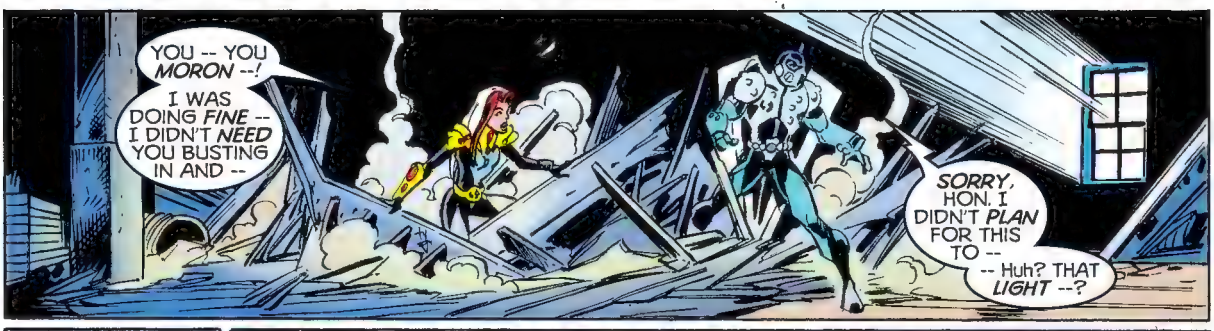
SO I ANNOUNCE MYSELF, AND YOU ASSUME I'M HERE TO TAKE YOU IN--
-- BUT I GUESS WE'VE PUT THAT BEHIND US, AT LEAST FOR NOW.
HERE'S MY OFFER: I USED TO LEAD THE WEST COAST AVENGERS. I LIKED IT, AND WOULDN'T MIND DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT AGAIN.
SO IF YOU WANT, I'LL LEAD YOU -- BRINGIN' ALL THE PRESTIGE, SKILL AND WHATEVER ELSE I CAN SUPPLY TO THE TEAM --
-- AN' I'LL GET YOU A FAIR SHOT AT WINNING OVER THE PUBLIC AND GETTIN' PARDONED FOR YOUR CRIMES.
ON THE OTHER HAND, IF YOU GO BAD AGAIN -- IF YOU STRAY FROM THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW -- I'LL TAKE YOU DOWN MYSELF, AND HARD.
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
INTERESTING. I WOULDN'T HAVE COME UP WITH THIS ON MY OWN, BUT IT'S GOT POSSIBILITIES--
-- AND HAWKEYE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ALL THAT BRIGHT...
AN AVENGER -- LEADING THE TEAM? THAT'D SAY A LOT--!
SOMEBODY PINCH ME -- I MUST BE DREAMING!
I DUNNO -- IF WE COULD BE SURE YOU'RE BEIN' STRAIGHT WITH US --
YOU'RE NOT -- YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO HIM?! YOU CAN'T BE!
HE'S PLAYING YOU FOR CHUMPS -- ALL OF YOU! BUT HE DOESN'T FOOL ME!
HUH?
SONGBIRD, HONEY --
C'MON, KID, IT AIN'T LIKE--
NO!
YOU LISTEN TO HIM IF YOU WANT -- LISTEN TO HIM ALL THE WAY TO JAIL! BUT NOT ME --

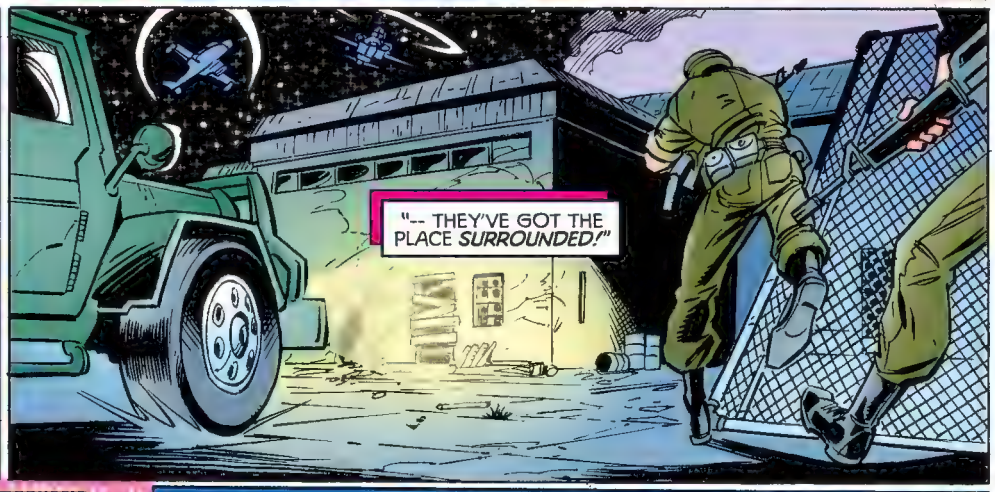
-- NOT MIM!!
SONGBIRD!
SHE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE! A COUPLE OF ARROWS --
-- A SCREAMER TO DISRUPT HER CONCENTRATION, A GAS-ARROW TO KNOCK HER OUT --!
WHAT? NO, HAWKEYE -- YOU CAN'T!
MAYBE YOU CAN BRING HER DOWN BY FORCE -- BUT THAT WON'T CONVINCE HER OF ANYTHING!
LET ME GO AFTER HER -- TALK TO HER, FIND OUT WHAT'S GOING ON --
-- LET TWO OF YOU RUN? NOT A CHANCE!
LOOK, HAWKEYE. IF WE'RE GOING TO TRUST EACH OTHER, IT'S GOT TO WORK BOTH WAYS. RIGHT?
OKAY, YOU SOLD ME. GO!
AND AS MACH-1 PURSUES THE RAPIDLY-DWINDLING SONGBIRD --


-- AT THE LOVELESS MOTEL OUTSIDE FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA, ANOTHER KIND OF PURSUIT IS UNDER WAY --
NOK NOK
YES? WHAT DO YOU --
-- Oh, GREAT.
DALLAS RIORDAN? FORMER NEW YORK MAYORAL ASSISTANT AND LIAISON TO THE THUNDERBOLTS? FORMER CLOSE PERSONAL FRIEND OF ATLAS?
I'M GAYLE ROGERS, AND --
I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.
YOU'RE THAT NETWORK SHILL THAT'S CHASING RATINGS BY TRYING TO CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT THE THUNDERBOLTS MIGHT BE HEROES.
AND NOW YOU WANT MY JUICY "INSIDE STORY."
WELL, LET ME TELL YOU THIS PLAINLY, SO MAYBE YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IT. THE THUNDERBOLTS RUINED MY LIFE -- PROFESSIONALLY AND PERSONALLY.
I HAVE ZERO INTEREST IN TALKING WITH YOU.
I'VE BEEN DOWN HERE VISITING WITH MY RETIRED FATHER, AND YOU'RE WELCOME TO GO BUG HIM, SINCE I EXPECT HE'LL PROBABLY JUST SHOOT YOU.
AS FOR ME, I'M LEAVING -- I WANT TO FIND SOMEWHERE, ANYWHERE, THAT I CAN GET AWAY FROM ALL THIS MADNESS, AND MAKE A NEW START.
AND THAT'S ALL I'VE GOT TO SAY.
BUT Ms. RIORDAN, THE PUBLIC HAS A RIGHT TO KNOW YOUR SIDE OF --
SLAMM
-- OR ON THE OTHER HAND, MAYBE NOT.
BUT MAYBE WE CAN INTERCUT SOME OF THAT WITH SOME SOUNDBITES FROM A FEW OF THE PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES THEY SAVED --

"-- CREATE A KIND OF ARE THEY/ AREN'T THEY RIFF..."
SHE'S BEEN FLYING FOR ALMOST AN HOUR, SCREAMING OUT HER ANGER AND FRUSTRATION. SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE SHE IS --
-- OR WHY HER INSIDES ARE TIED IN KNOTS. ALL SHE KNOWS --
WHMP
KSSH
POT-BARN
IT'S -- IT'S ONE OF THEM THUNDERBOLTS!
RUN -- RUN! SHE'S HEADED THIS WAY!
-- IS THAT SHE'S GOT TO LASH OUT, GOT TO SMASH THINGS, UNTIL --
-- UNTIL --
H-Huh?
BLAM
BLAM
SURPRISED, BABE? MAYBE NEXT TIME YOU'LL THINK FIRST -- BEFORE ATTACKIN' A TOWN WITH A NATIONAL GUARD BARRACKS JUST UP THE ROAD!
JUST KEEP FIRING, PETE! KEEP HER PINNED DOWN, AND ON THE DEFENSIVE --
BRAKKAK
-- UNTIL THE CHOPPERS GET INTO POSITION!
BRAKKA
BRAKKAKAK
AND ALL OF A SUDDEN --
YOU WANT A PIECE OF ME?

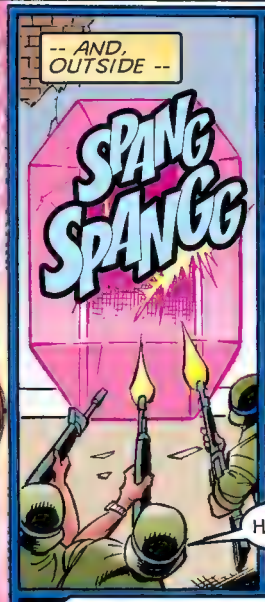
-- SHE'S NOT SCARED ANY MORE, NOT CONFUSED. THIS IS WHAT SHE WANTED -- WHAT SHE WAS WAITING FOR.
WELL, DO YOUR BEST, SOLDIER-BOYS -- BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THE RING WITH MIMI NOW --
-- AND THAT'S A WORLD OF HURT!
BUT --
SONGBIRD -- MELISSA -- WHAT ARE YOU DOING? TRYING TO GET YOURSELF KILLED?!
MMF?!
COME ON, HONEY -- THERE ARE FIGHTS YOU FIGHT, AND FIGHTS YOU RUN FROM, AND THIS IS DEFINITELY ONE OF THE RUNNING KIND.
BUT DON'T WORRY -- MY SUIT'LL SHIELD YOU FROM THE GUNFIRE, AND I'LL HAVE NO PROBLEM OUT-DISTANCING THESE --
BRAKKAKAK
SPOING
"SPOING?" Uh-Oh...
MMFM?
SORRY, KID -- WE'RE GOIN' DOWN.
MY CYBER-HARNESS -- IT'S BEEN ON THE FRITZ EVER SINCE WE FOUGHT GRAVITON -- AND WITHOUT TECHNO AROUND, I CAN'T FIX IT RIGHT!
I CAN KEEP IT UP AND RUNNING MOST OF THE TIME --
-- BUT OF ALL THE TIMES FOR IT TO FAIL --!

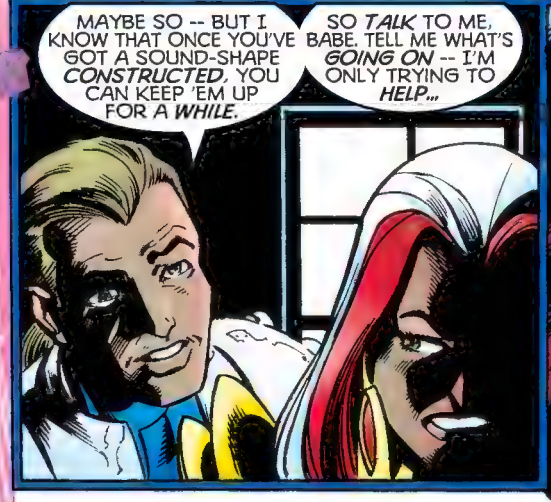


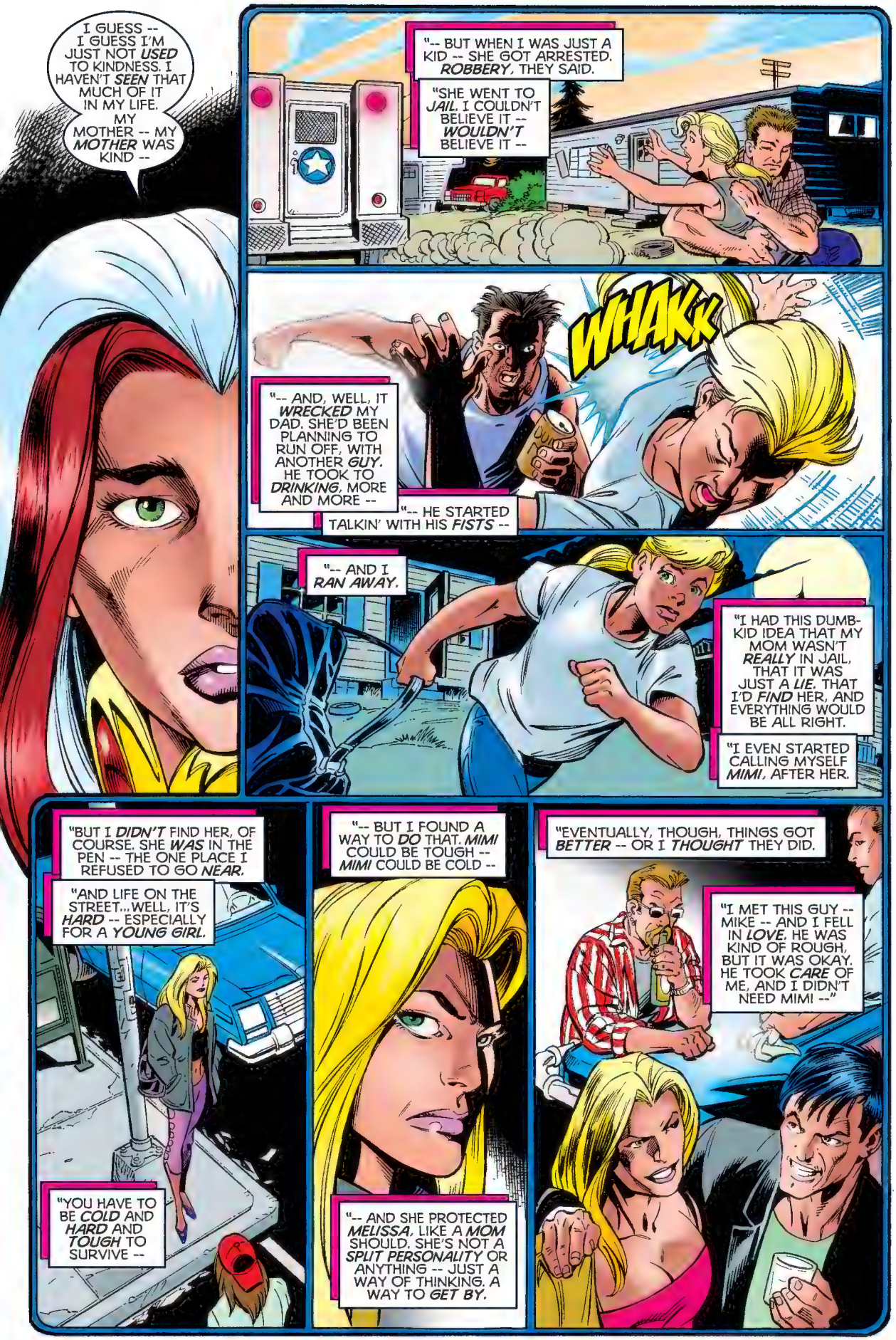


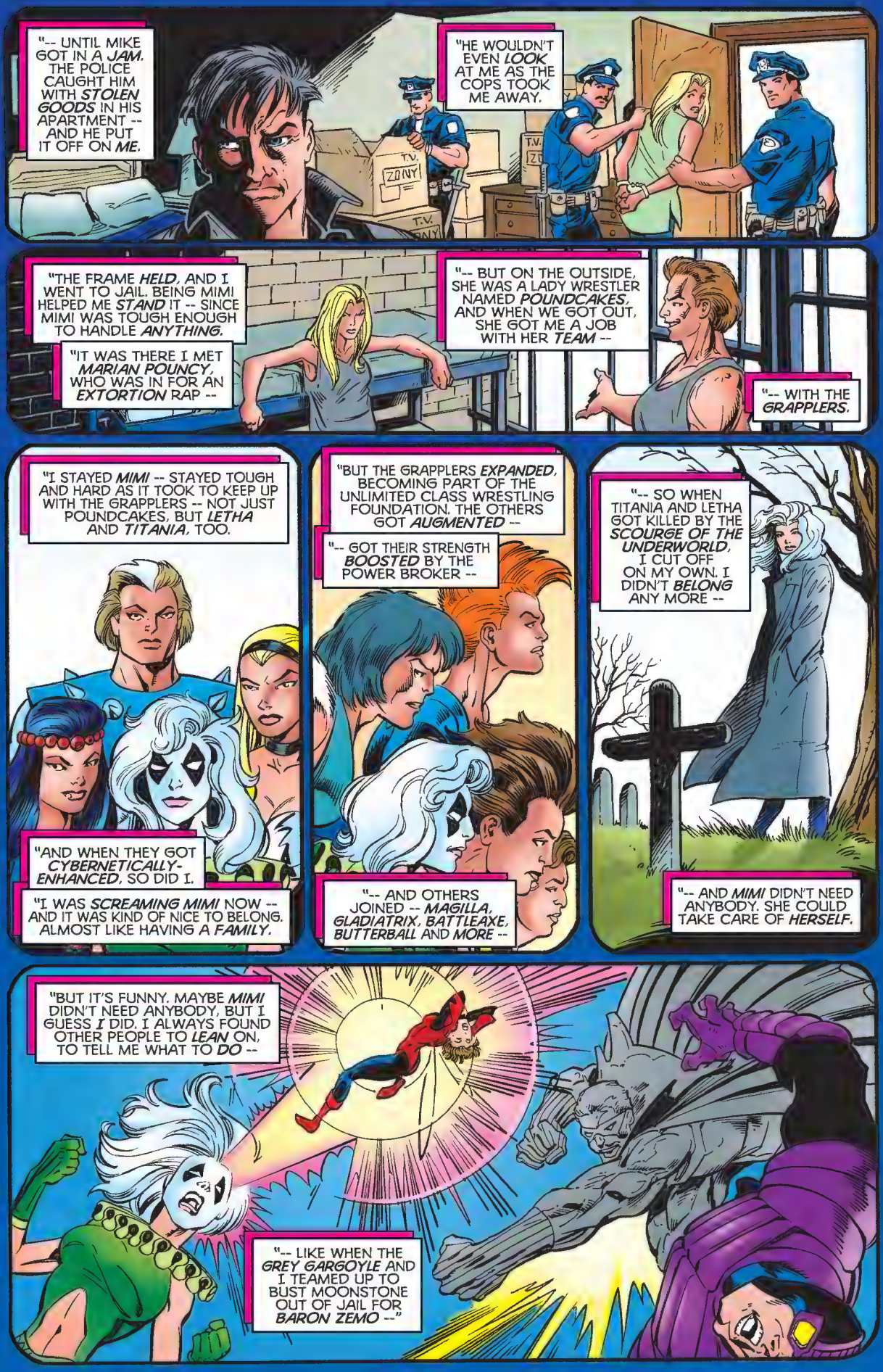
WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, SONGBIRD SCREAMS.

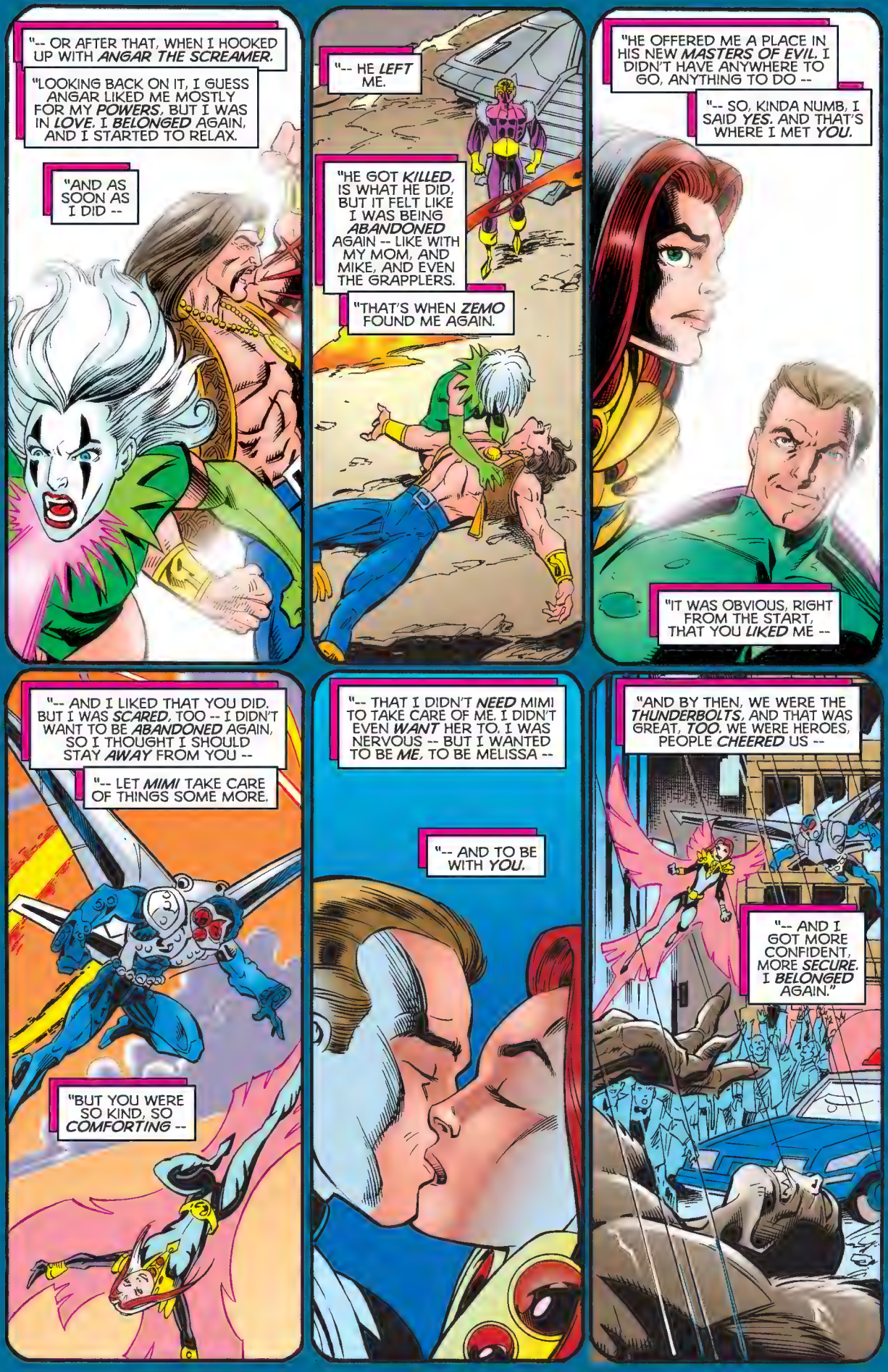
THE SOUND POURS OUT FROM HER THROAT IN WAVES, WASHING UP AGAINST THE WALLS OF THE OLD WAREHOUSE -- AGAINST THE ROOF --




MAYBE SO -- BUT I KNOW THAT ONCE YOU'VE GOT A SOUND-SHAPE CONSTRUCTED, YOU CAN KEEP 'EM UP FOR A WHILE.
SO TALK TO ME, BABE. TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON -- I'M ONLY TRYING TO HELP...


I GUESS -- I GUESS I'M JUST NOT *USED* TO KINDNESS. I HAVEN'T *SEEN* THAT MUCH OF IT IN MY LIFE. MY MOTHER -- MY *MOTHER* WAS KIND --
"-- BUT WHEN I WAS JUST A KID -- SHE GOT ARRESTED. *ROBBERY,* THEY SAID.
"SHE WENT TO *JAIL.* I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT -- *WOULDN'T* BELIEVE IT --
WHAKK
"-- AND, WELL, IT *WRECKED* MY DAD. SHE'D BEEN PLANNING TO RUN OFF, WITH ANOTHER *GUY.* HE TOOK TO *DRINKING,* MORE AND MORE --
"-- HE STARTED TALKIN' WITH HIS *FISTS* --
"-- AND I *RAN AWAY.*
"I HAD THIS DUMB-KID IDEA THAT MY MOM WASN'T *REALLY* IN JAIL, THAT IT WAS JUST A *LIE.* THAT I'D *FIND* HER, AND EVERYTHING WOULD BE ALL RIGHT.
"I EVEN STARTED CALLING MYSELF *MIMI,* AFTER HER.
"BUT I *DIDN'T* FIND HER, OF COURSE. SHE *WAS* IN THE PEN -- THE ONE PLACE I REFUSED TO GO *NEAR.*
"AND LIFE ON THE STREET...WELL, IT'S *HARD* -- ESPECIALLY FOR A *YOUNG GIRL.*
"YOU HAVE TO BE *COLD* AND *HARD* AND *TOUGH* TO SURVIVE --
"-- BUT I FOUND A WAY TO *DO* THAT. *MIMI* COULD BE TOUGH -- *MIMI* COULD BE COLD --
"-- AND SHE PROTECTED *MELISSA,* LIKE A *MOM* SHOULD. SHE'S NOT A *SPLIT PERSONALITY* OR ANYTHING -- JUST A WAY OF THINKING. A WAY TO *GET BY.*
"EVENTUALLY, THOUGH, THINGS GOT *BETTER* -- OR I *THOUGHT* THEY DID.
"I MET THIS GUY -- MIKE -- AND I FELL IN *LOVE.* HE WAS KIND OF ROUGH, BUT IT WAS OKAY. HE TOOK *CARE* OF ME, AND I DIDN'T NEED MIMI --"


"-- UNTIL MIKE GOT IN A JAM. THE POLICE CAUGHT HIM WITH STOLEN GOODS IN HIS APARTMENT -- AND HE PUT IT OFF ON ME.
"HE WOULDN'T EVEN LOOK AT ME AS THE COPS TOOK ME AWAY.
T.V. ZONY
T.V. ZONY
"THE FRAME HELD, AND I WENT TO JAIL. BEING MIMI HELPED ME STAND IT -- SINCE MIMI WAS TOUGH ENOUGH TO HANDLE ANYTHING.
"IT WAS THERE I MET MARIAN POUNCY, WHO WAS IN FOR AN EXTORTION RAP --
"-- BUT ON THE OUTSIDE, SHE WAS A LADY WRESTLER NAMED POUNDCAKES, AND WHEN WE GOT OUT, SHE GOT ME A JOB WITH HER TEAM --
"-- WITH THE GRAPPLERS.
"I STAYED MIMI -- STAYED TOUGH AND HARD AS IT TOOK TO KEEP UP WITH THE GRAPPLERS -- NOT JUST POUNDCAKES, BUT LETHA AND TITANIA, TOO.
"AND WHEN THEY GOT CYBERNETICALLY-ENHANCED, SO DID I.
"I WAS SCREAMING MIMI NOW -- AND IT WAS KIND OF NICE TO BELONG. ALMOST LIKE HAVING A FAMILY.
"BUT THE GRAPPLERS EXPANDED, BECOMING PART OF THE UNLIMITED CLASS WRESTLING FOUNDATION. THE OTHERS GOT AUGMENTED --
"-- GOT THEIR STRENGTH BOOSTED BY THE POWER BROKER --
"-- AND OTHERS JOINED -- MAGILLA, GLADIATRIX, BATTLEAXE, BUTTERBALL AND MORE --
"-- SO WHEN TITANIA AND LETHA GOT KILLED BY THE SCOURGE OF THE UNDERWORLD, I CUT OFF ON MY OWN. I DIDN'T BELONG ANY MORE --
"-- AND MIMI DIDN'T NEED ANYBODY. SHE COULD TAKE CARE OF HERSELF.
"BUT IT'S FUNNY. MAYBE MIMI DIDN'T NEED ANYBODY, BUT I GUESS I DID. I ALWAYS FOUND OTHER PEOPLE TO LEAN ON, TO TELL ME WHAT TO DO --
"-- LIKE WHEN THE GREY GARGOYLE AND I TEAMED UP TO BUST MOONSTONE OUT OF JAIL FOR BARON ZEMO --"


"-- OR AFTER THAT, WHEN I HOOKED UP WITH ANGAR THE SCREAMER.
"LOOKING BACK ON IT, I GUESS ANGAR LIKED ME MOSTLY FOR MY POWERS, BUT I WAS IN LOVE. I BELONGED AGAIN, AND I STARTED TO RELAX.
"AND AS SOON AS I DID --
"-- HE LEFT ME.
"HE GOT KILLED, IS WHAT HE DID, BUT IT FELT LIKE I WAS BEING ABANDONED AGAIN -- LIKE WITH MY MOM, AND MIKE, AND EVEN THE GRAPPLERS.
"THAT'S WHEN ZEMO FOUND ME AGAIN.
"HE OFFERED ME A PLACE IN HIS NEW MASTERS OF EVIL. I DIDN'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO, ANYTHING TO DO --
"-- SO, KINDA NUMB, I SAID YES. AND THAT'S WHERE I MET YOU.
"IT WAS OBVIOUS, RIGHT FROM THE START, THAT YOU LIKED ME --
"-- AND I LIKED THAT YOU DID. BUT I WAS SCARED, TOO -- I DIDN'T WANT TO BE ABANDONED AGAIN, SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM YOU --
"-- LET MIMI TAKE CARE OF THINGS SOME MORE.
"BUT YOU WERE SO KIND, SO COMFORTING --
"-- THAT I DIDN'T NEED MIMI TO TAKE CARE OF ME. I DIDN'T EVEN WANT HER TO. I WAS NERVOUS -- BUT I WANTED TO BE ME, TO BE MELISSA --
"-- AND TO BE WITH YOU.
"AND BY THEN, WE WERE THE THUNDERBOLTS, AND THAT WAS GREAT, TOO. WE WERE HEROES, PEOPLE CHEERED US --
"-- AND I GOT MORE CONFIDENT, MORE SECURE. I BELONGED AGAIN."

"THAT'S WHAT IT *FELT* LIKE, ANYWAY.
"WE'D GONE FROM HEROES BEING *HONORED* BY THE MAYOR TO CROOKS ON THE RUN IN *SECONDS* -- THE WHOLE *CITY* HATED US --
SO OF COURSE, THAT'S WHEN ZEMO EXPOSED US AS *CRIMINALS*, AND EVERYTHING FELL *APART* AGAIN.
EVERY TIME I LET MY *GUARD* DOWN, Huh?
"-- AND WHEN WE *ESCAPED*, GOT UP TO ZEMO'S SATELLITE TO PUT HIS PLAN IN MOTION -- WELL, WE SPLIT APART AND *FOUGHT* EACH OTHER --
"-- AND MAYBE IT WAS TO SAVE THE *WORLD*, BUT ALL I COULD SEE WAS THAT IT WAS *HAPPENING* AGAIN, LIKE IT *ALWAYS* DID.
"I STARTED TO *CARE*, AND I LOST *EVERYTHING*.
"SO I DECIDED NOT TO *CARE* ANY MORE. NOT ABOUT YOU, NOT ABOUT THE THUNDERBOLTS, NOT ABOUT *ANYTHING*. I KNEW HOW TO *DO* THAT, AFTER ALL.
"I'D SPENT LONG ENOUGH AS MIMI TO KNOW *HOW*. JUST DON'T LET ANYTHING *IN* -- BECAUSE IF THEY CAN'T GET IN, THEY CAN'T *HURT* YOU.
"AND THAT WAS *FINE*. WE WERE ON THE RUN, LIVING IN A *PIGSTY*, HATED BY EVERYONE, HUNTED BY THE COPS *AND* THE CROOKS --
"-- BUT MIMI COULD *HANDLE* THAT. MIMI COULD *TAKE* IT."
WHAT I COULDN'T TAKE IS THAT NO MATTER HOW HARD I PUSHED YOU *AWAY*, YOU KEPT ON *LOVING* ME -- YOU KEPT ON *CARING* --
-- AND THEN THERE'S HAWKEYE AND HIS *OFFER*, AND IT S-SEEMS LIKE THERE'S *HOPE* AGAIN -- A-AND I JUST C-CAN'T STAND THE THOUGHT --
-- OF *HOPING* -- AND BEING *WRONG* AGAIN...
SO YOU TRIED TO PUSH IT AWAY -- TRIED TO PUSH *EVERYTHING* AWAY, Huh? WELL, SORRY, BABE -- BUT YOU CAN'T PUSH *HARD* ENOUGH TO LOSE *ME*.
I'M *NOT* GOING TO ABANDON YOU. I'M NOT LIKE THE *OTHERS*. I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU. *ALWAYS*.

AND, BACK AT THE T-BOLTS' CABIN...
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS. IF THEY DON'T COME BACK -- IF I JUST LET THE BEETLE AND SCREAMING MIMI ESCAPE SCOT-FREE --
MISS MANNERS.
RELAX, HAWKEYE. I KNOW YOU'VE NO REASON TO BELIEVE US, BUT --
SKRX! ABE TO T-BASE -- COME IN, T-BASE! ANYONE THERE?
HEY -- IT'S HIM!
KARLA HERE, ABE. WHAT'S YOUR SITUATION?
WE'RE OKAY -- BUT WE'RE KIND OF STUCK.
WE'RE IN A WAREHOUSE ON THE NORTH SIDE OF COPPERVALE. IT'S EASY TO RECOGNIZE -- IT'S THE ONE WITH NATIONAL GUARDSMEN ALL AROUND IT.
MY SUIT'S ON THE BLINK -- AND MELISSA'S OVEREXTENDED, SO WE CAN'T MAKE A RUN FOR IT --
WE'VE GOT TO GO GET THEM -- BREAK THEM OUT --
SURE, OF COURSE!
WE CAN HIT THE GUARD FROM BEHIND, KEEP 'EM OCCUPIED -- WHILE MOONSTONE BURSTS IN AND EVACS ABE AND MELISSA --
Ah-Ah!
LESSON FIVE, GANG. IF YOU WANT TO CONVINCE PEOPLE THAT YOU'VE REFORMED -- PICKING FIGHTS WITH THE AUTHORITIES ISN'T THE WAY TO DO IT.
BUT -- WE CAN'T JUST LEAVE 'EM --
NO, OF COURSE NOT. AND WE WON'T. HERE'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO...

SOON, ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF TOWN...
...OUTSIDE A CONDEMNED OFFICE BUILDING, SCHEDULED TO BEGIN DEMOLITION ON MONDAY...
O-KAY! THIS IS THE PLACE -- AN' JOLT'S MADE SURE THERE'S NO ONE IN IT! SO COME ON, THUNDERBOLTS --
-- LET'S DO IT!
SHOMMBL
THAT'S THE ROOF DOWN -- AND THE MAIN FACADE! IT'S WIDE OPEN, JOLT -- SO GET IN THERE AND START CAROMING THROUGH THOSE INTERIOR WALLS!
BK-ASSH
WE'LL WORK ON THE BACK WING UNTIL YOU'RE THROUGH -- AND THEN WE'LL TAKE THE WHOLE THING DOWN!
AND, INEVITABLY...
LOOK! LOOK! SOMEBODY --
"-- CALL THE COPS!"
SERGEANT, WHAT --?
IT'S THE POLICE, SIR. THEY'VE GOT ANOTHER SITUATION -- THE REST OF THE THUNDERBOLTS COMMITTING MAYHEM ON THE OTHER SIDE OF TOWN.
THEY'RE REQUESTING OUR AID.
JUST LIKE THE T-BOLTS KNEW THEY WOULD, I EXPECT.
BUT WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE. WE'LL LEAVE A SMALL GROUP HERE TO GUARD THE PLACE --

"-- WHILE THE REST OF OUR FORCES DEAL WITH THE ACTIVE THREAT."
IN MOMENTS, THE BULK OF THE GUARDSMEN ARE MOVING OUT --
-- AND, INEVITABLY, THERE'S A BRIEF PERIOD OF CONFUSION, AS ORDERS ARE GIVEN AND ATTENTION WAVERS --
-- AND THAT'S JUST WHAT A CERTAIN AVENGER-ON-LEAVE HAS BEEN WAITING FOR.
SONGBIRD -- THIS IS HAWKEYE. DROP ONE OF THE BARRIERS ON THE EAST SIDE, WHERE MOST OF THE SHADOWS ARE. I'M COMING IN.
GOT IT!
AND IN MOMENTS...
NOW THERE'S A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES! BUT -- WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?
RIGHT ABOUT NOW, THEY'RE PROBABLY DROPPIN' WHATEVER THEY'RE DOIN' AND BOOKIN' FOR HOME -- WHICH IS WHAT I SUGGEST WE DO!
THIS SKY-BUGGY'S QUIET, AND I THINK I GOT IN WITHOUT BEIN' SPOTTED -- BUT I DON'T PARTICULARLY WANT TO HANG AROUND AND FIND OUT!
YOU WITH ME?
THEY'RE WITH HIM.
SECONDS AFTER IT ENTERED, THE ATOMIC STEED IS CLIMBING FOR THE SKY AGAIN, CLIMBING AT TOP SPEED. AND EVEN WITH ITS ADDED BURDEN --
-- IN THIS LIGHT, IT'S LITTLE MORE THAN A BLUR TO ANYONE LOOKING UP --

-- BUT STILL --
LOOK! IT MUST BE THEM -- THEY'RE GETTING AWAY!
AND REALLY TRAVELLING, TOO -- THEY'RE ALREADY OUT OF RANGE! BUT -- THERE'S SOMEONE ELSE --
CLK CLK
LOOKS LIKE IT, SOLDIER!
"I CAN'T MAKE HIM OUT ANY MORE THAN YOU CAN --
"-- BUT MAYBE -- WHEN I GET THIS DEVELOPED--!"
THE THUNDERBOLTS -- BOTH SQUADS -- ELUDE PURSUIT, AND MAKE IT BACK TO THE CABIN UNDETECTED. AND, THE NEXT MORNING...
SEEMS TO ME I HEARD A LOT OF JAWIN' LAST NIGHT -- FOR MOST OF THE NIGHT, TOO, IT SOUNDED LIKE.
AND THIS LOOKS LIKE A PRETTY SERIOUS KAFFEEKLATSCH. YOU GUYS REACHED A DECISION?
YES -- WE'LL ACCEPT YOUR OFFER.
BUT -- YOU SAID THIS WAS OFFICIAL, RIGHT? IF WE PROVE OURSELVES AS HEROES, WE GET PARDONED?
OFFICIAL?
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND, AVENGER?
YOU'RE ASKING US TO TAKE LONGTIME SUPER-CRIMINALS -- DEADLY THREATS WHO JUST RECENTLY TRIED TO TAKE OVER THE ENTIRE WORLD --
-- AND TELL THEM THAT IF THEY ACT NICE FROM NOW ON, THEY DON'T HAVE TO PAY FOR THEIR CRIMES?
THE COMMISSION WILL NOT SANCTION THIS. WE WILL NOT GIVE YOU ANY LICENSE TO IGNORE THIS COUNTRY'S JUSTICE SYSTEM. AND MORE --
-- IF YOU SO MUCH AS GO ANYWHERE NEAR THE THUNDERBOLTS, WE'LL CHARGE YOU AS AN ACCESSORY AFTER THE FACT TO THEIR CRIMES --
-- AND JAIL YOU ALONGSIDE THEM!

YEAH, SURE -- IT'S OFFICIAL. NO PROBLEM THERE.
BUT THERE IS ONE OTHER THING.
ONE OTHER THING?
I HAVE ANOTHER CONDITION.
IT'S SOMETHING I DIDN'T WANT TO BRING UP RIGHT UP FRONT -- I WANTED YOU TO HAVE A CHANCE TO THINK ABOUT THE DEAL FIRST.
BUT IT'S ONE THING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE AT REDEEMING YOURSELVES FOR CRIMES LIKE ROBBERY, FRAUD AND CONSPIRACY --
-- THOSE ARE SERIOUS THINGS, BUT YOU CAN GET PAST 'EM.
AND PEOPLE DIED DURING ZEMO'S ASSAULT ON THE WORLD, BUT YOU FOUGHT AGAINST HIM, SO THAT COUNTS FOR SOMETHING.
STILL, THERE IS ONE CRIME THAT I CAN'T OVERLOOK, THAT CAN'T BE GLOSSED OVER NO MATTER HOW HEROIC YOU ARE AFTERWARD. AND THAT'S MURDER.
SO YOU'VE GOT ANOTHER CHOICE TO MAKE.
THE ONLY WAY I'LL LEAD YOU -- THE ONLY WAY I CAN MAKE THIS WORK -- IS IF THE ONLY KNOWN MURDERER AMONG YOU TURNS HIMSELF IN.
AND THAT'S YOU, MACH-1. YOU'VE GOT TO GO TO JAIL --
-- OR THE DEAL'S OFF!
WH-WHAT--?!
NEXT: THE BIG DECISION! THE T-BOLTS' NEW DIRECTION!
AND OH, YEAH -- HERCULES!

MARVEL COMICS
MARVEL'S MOST WANTED:
THUNDERBOLTS
GRUDGE MATCH:
HERCULES VS. ATLAS!
JAN
#22
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
WWW.MARVEL.COM
BUSIEK
BAGLEY
HANNA

IT WAS THE MASTERS OF EVIL'S BOLDEST, MOST DARING PLAN. OVER A DOZEN POWERFUL SUPER-VILLAINS, LED BY BARON ZEMO --
-- IN A CAREFULLY-COORDINATED ASSAULT ON THE AVENGERS, AND THEIR MANSION HEADQUARTERS.
AND IT WAS NOT MERELY FORCE THAT WAS BROUGHT TO BEAR, BUT CUNNING, AS WELL. EACH OF THE HEROES WAS STUDIED, PLANNED FOR --
-- THEIR WEAKNESSES EXPLOITED.
FOR INSTANCE, HERCULES WAS LURED INTO DAYS OF DRUNKEN CAROUSING THAT WOULD HAVE LEFT HIM IRRATIONAL AND CARELESS --
-- EVEN WITHOUT THE DRUGS HIS ALE HAD BEEN LACED WITH.
DID YOU JACKALS THINK YOU COULD OVERCOME THE LION OF OLYMPUS WITH MERE NUMBERS? FOOLS...
... I AM NO STRANGER TO BATTLE!
STILL, HE HELD HIS OWN -- HELD HIS OWN AGAINST SIX SUPER-STRONG OPPONENTS --
-- UNTIL A SEVENTH ENTERED THE BATTLE. A SEVENTH WHO STRUCK FROM BEHIND, MOCKING AND INSOLENT --
-- AND WHO THEN WATCHED, GRINNING, LAUGHING, AS THE OTHERS BEAT HERCULES INTO A COMA, INTO BRAIN-DAMAGE --
SPANG
WOK WOK WOK
FWAM
KRUNK
-- BEAT HIM NEARLY TO DEATH --
BUT ALL THAT WAS YEARS AGO. TODAY, A SOPHISTICATED AIRSHIP, BORROWED FROM ORACLE INDUSTRIES, SKIMS OVER THE COLORADO ROCKIES --
-- ITS PILOT VERY DETERMINED -- AND VERY ANGRY --
FOR THE WHOLE EPIC STORY, DON'T MISS THE AVENGERS: UNDER SIEGE TRADE PAPERBACK, ON SALE NEXT WEEK!
– Edited-It-Himself-Brevoort

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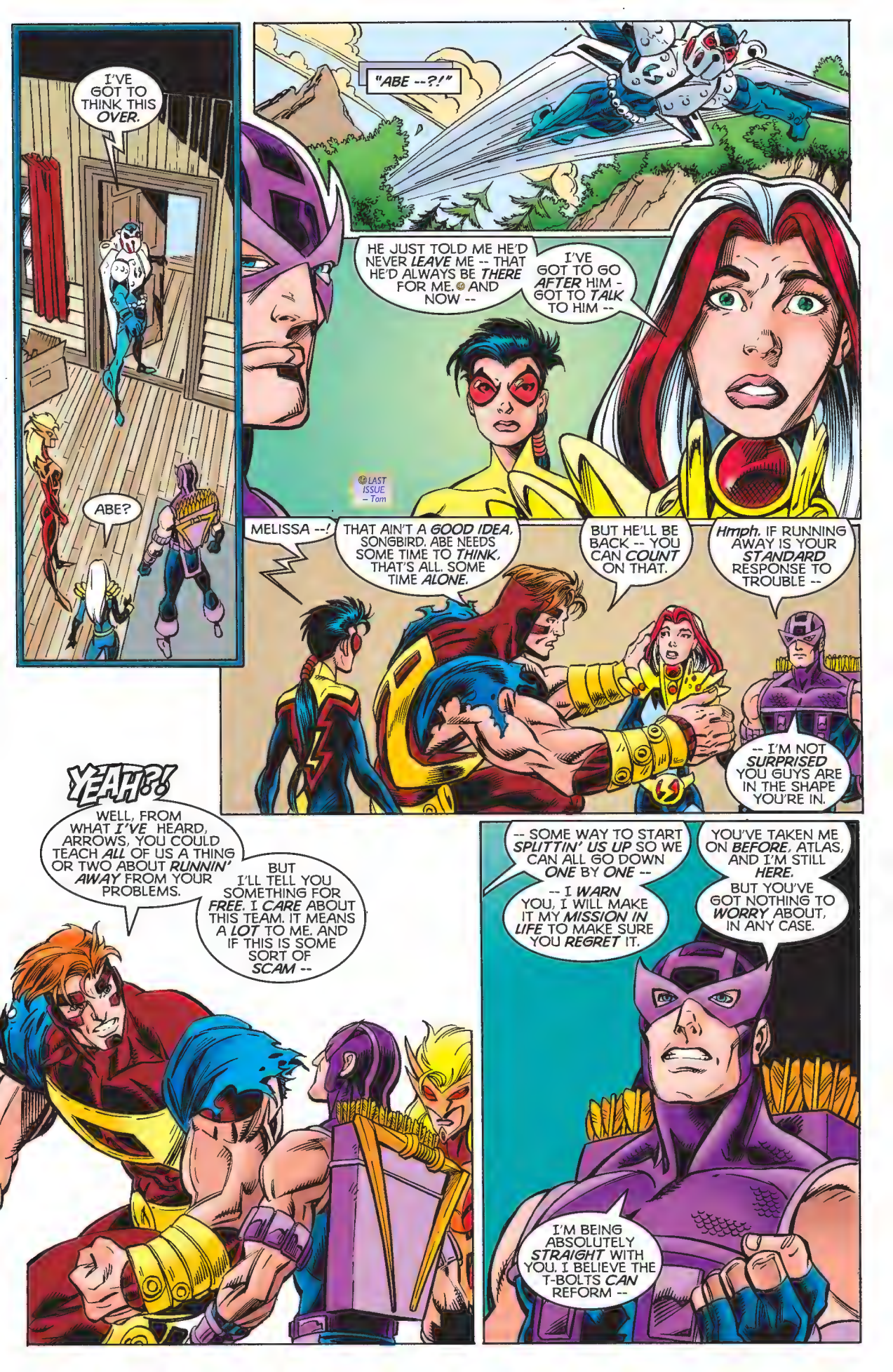
AND ELSEWHERE IN THOSE MOUNTAINS, AT THE SECLUDED HIDEAWAY OF THE THUNDERBOLTS --
-- THE VILLAINS-TURNED-WOULD-BE-HEROES HAVE JUST ACCEPTED A NEW LEADER -- HAWKEYE, MASTER MARKSMAN AND LONGTIME AVENGER --
-- BUT HE'S GOT A CONDITION --
YOU -- YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! ME -- GO TO JAIL?!
I'VE PROVED MYSELF -- I'VE HELPED SAVE THE WORLD! I'VE FOUGHT AGAINST GRAVITON, AGAINST THE CRIMSON COWL --
YOU ALSO KILLED SOMEONE, MACH-1, OR HAVE YOU ALREADY FORGOTTEN Dr. JARED GOULDING?
MAYBE HE WASN'T A STERLING EXAMPLE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION --
-- HE TREATED CRIMINALS UNDER THE TABLE, RAN UP BIG GAMBLING DEBTS --
-- BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN IT'S OKAY TO KILL HIM.
"AND THAT'S WHAT YOU DID, BACK WHEN YOU WERE THE BEETLE. YOU ELECTROCUTED HIM --
"-- MURDERED HIM AS AN 'EXAMPLE' OF WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE WHO DON'T PAY OFF THE MOB.[1]"
[1] IT WAS IN DEADLY FOES OF SPIDER-MAN #3 – Tom.
IF YOU'RE SERIOUS ABOUT GOING STRAIGHT -- ABOUT SHOWING THE WORLD THAT YOU'VE REFORMED -- YOU'LL TURN YOURSELF IN, DO YOUR TIME.
OR DOES THE THUNDERBOLTS' NEWFOUND HEROISM ONLY COUNT THE STUFF THAT'S HAPPENED SINCE YOU ADOPTED THESE NEW IDENTITIES?
I DON'T -- I CAN'T -- I MEAN --


I'VE GOT TO THINK THIS OVER.
ABE?
"ABE --?!"
HE JUST TOLD ME HE'D NEVER LEAVE ME -- THAT HE'D ALWAYS BE THERE FOR ME. AND NOW --
I'VE GOT TO GO AFTER HIM - GOT TO TALK TO HIM --
LAST ISSUE -- Tom
MELISSA --!
THAT AIN'T A GOOD IDEA, SONGBIRD. ABE NEEDS SOME TIME TO THINK, THAT'S ALL. SOME TIME ALONE.
BUT HE'LL BE BACK -- YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT.
Hmph. IF RUNNING AWAY IS YOUR STANDARD RESPONSE TO TROUBLE --
-- I'M NOT SURPRISED YOU GUYS ARE IN THE SHAPE YOU'RE IN.
YEAH?!
WELL, FROM WHAT I'VE HEARD, ARROWS, YOU COULD TEACH ALL OF US A THING OR TWO ABOUT RUNNIN' AWAY FROM YOUR PROBLEMS.
BUT I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING FOR FREE. I CARE ABOUT THIS TEAM. IT MEANS A LOT TO ME. AND IF THIS IS SOME SORT OF SCAM --
-- SOME WAY TO START SPLITTIN' US UP SO WE CAN ALL GO DOWN ONE BY ONE --
-- I WARN YOU, I WILL MAKE IT MY MISSION IN LIFE TO MAKE SURE YOU REGRET IT.
YOU'VE TAKEN ME ON BEFORE, ATLAS, AND I'M STILL HERE.
BUT YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, IN ANY CASE.
I'M BEING ABSOLUTELY STRAIGHT WITH YOU. I BELIEVE THE T-BOLTS CAN REFORM --

-- BUT SOME CRIMES *CAN'T* BE SWEPT UNDER THE RUG, NO MATTER *HOW* MANY HEROIC DEEDS YOU DO, AND *MURDER'S* ONE OF 'EM.
MACH-1 CAN *REJOIN* ONCE HE'S DONE HIS TIME, BUT IF I'M GOING TO LEAD THIS TEAM, THERE'LL BE NO *KILLERS* ON IT.
Oh *YEAH?* THEN YOU SHOULDN'T BE PICKING ON MY *ABE*, Mr. HIGH-AND-MIGHTY! NOT WHILE --
Huh?
IF SHE LETS HIM KNOW ABOUT *KOSMOS* --!
OW!
MELISSA, THIS ISN'T REALLY THE *TIME* OR *PLACE*...
WHERE MOONSTONE KILLED THE KOSMOSIAN RULER IN FRONT OF MACH-1 AND SONGBIRD, BACK IN #14 – TOM.
WHAT WAS *THAT* ALL ABOUT --?
SONGBIRD WAS THINKING OF A *CONVERSATION* SHE AND I HAD -- ABOUT HOW THERE ARE SO-CALLED *"HEROES"* WHO KILL --
-- LIKE *WOLVERINE*, THE *PUNISHER* AND *PALADIN* -- AND THE AVENGERS DON'T GO AFTER *THEM*. BUT IT'S NOT REALLY RELEVANT TO *THIS*.
Uh -- YEAH, MOONSTONE'S *RIGHT*. I WAS JUST MAD...
I DON'T *KNOW* THIS TEAM WELL ENOUGH YET TO READ THEM -- BUT THOSE TWO ARE *HIDING* SOMETHING. I'LL HAVE TO STAY *WARY*...
WELL, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN ANY OF THOSE GUYS BECOME *AVENGERS*, HAVE YOU? AND THEY'RE NOT GONNA BE *THUNDERBOLTS* EITHER, I'LL TELL YOU --
KSSH
Huh?
WH-*WHAT* --?!

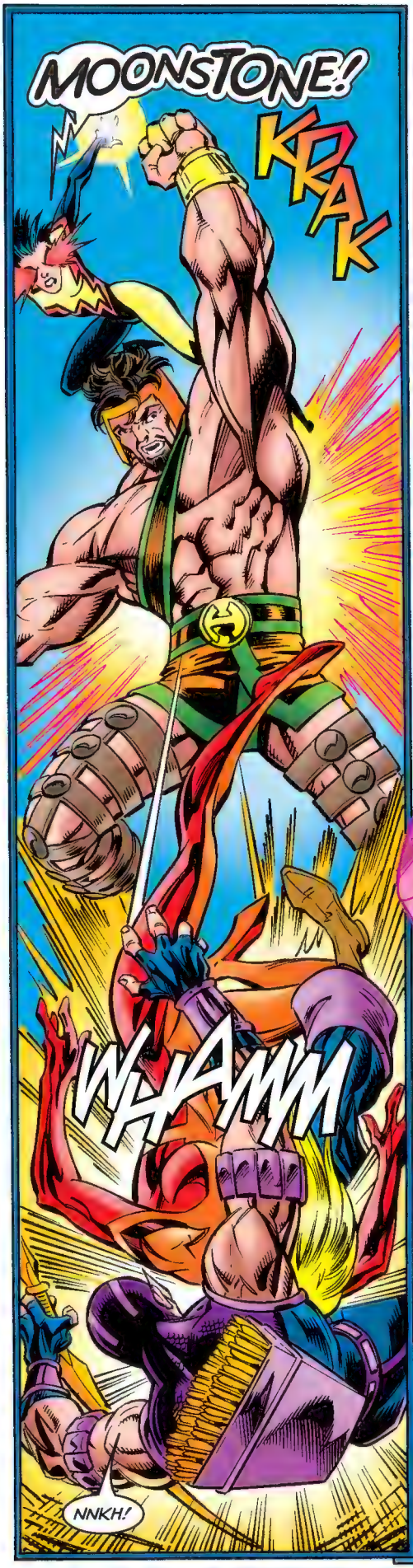
HEAR ME, VILLAINS MOST FOUL!
I AM HERCULES, THE LION OF OLYMPUS! HERCULES -- THE PRINCE OF POWER! AND I HAVE COME FOR THE ONE ONCE CALLED GOLIATH --
-- COME FOR VENGEANCE, AND GODLY RETRIBUTION 'GAINST HIM WHO DID MOST TREACHEROUSLY LAY ME LOW!
SO SCATTER, YOU OTHERS -- FLEE LIKE THE VERMIN YOU ARE! HERCULES HAS COME TO VISIT HIS WRATH 'PON ERIK JOSTEN -- UPON ATLAS --
-- AND NONE SHALL STAND IN HIS WAY!
MARVEL'S Stan Lee presents: MOST WANTED
DECISIONS PART 3:
TAKING A STAND
BY HURT BUSIEK & MARK BAGLEY
SCOTT HANNA INKER
JOE ROSAS COLORS
LETTERS RS & COMICRAFT'S LIZ AGRAPHIOTIS
TOM BREVOORT EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF

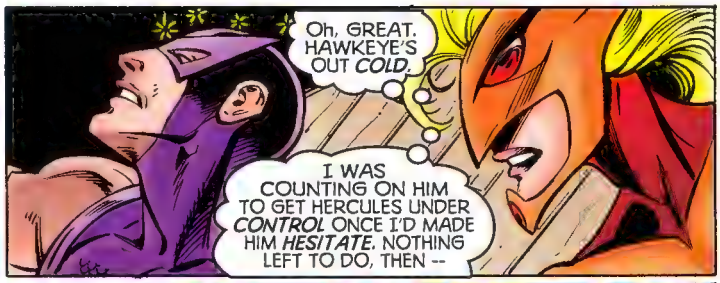
AND NOW, VILE MISCRE -- Eh? HAWKEYE?
HERCULES? Oh, THIS IS NOT GOOD. NOT GOOD AT ALL.
WHOA, HERC. EASE ON DOWN, BIG FELLA. THIS AIN'T A GOOD TIME. LET'S ALL SIT DOWN, HAVE A CUP OF JAVA AN' TALK, BEFORE --
HERCULES? Oh, MAN -- I SHOULD'VE EXPECTED THIS -- SOMEDAY --
OUR CABIN -- WE JUST REPAIRED THE ROOF, AFTER CYCLONE --
Shh, SONGBIRD. THIS IS A LITTLE MORE CRUCIAL THAN THE CABIN...
I KNOW NOT WHY YOU ARE HERE, FRIEND BOWMAN. BUT THIS HONORLESS KNAVE DID DO MOST GRIEVOUS HARM TO ME, YEARS AGONE --
-- AND AGAIN, I SAY I SHALL GIVE HIM THE PUNISHMENT HE HAS EARNED.
AND AGAIN, I'M TELLIN' YOU IT'S A BAD TIME, HERC! THINGS HAVE CHANGED -- AND I CAN'T LET YOU JUST --
HERE, HAWKEYE -- LET ME SAY SOMETHING.
YOU'RE RIGHT, HERCULES. IT WAS A ROTTEN THING TO DO. I WAS A REAL JERK.
I WAS CRAZY BACK THEN -- I DID A LOT OF STUPID, NASTY, CRIMINAL STUFF. AND I KNOW APOLOGIZING DOESN'T MAKE UP FOR ANY OF IT, BUT --
DOES NOT MAKE UP FOR IT?
I SPENT WEEKS AT DEATH'S DOOR, CUR -- BROKEN AND HELPLESS, WITH NONE WAGERING THAT I WOULD E'ER RECOVER! AND AFTER THAT --
-- TO WALK AMONG THE SPIRES OF OLYMPUS, BRAIN-DAMAGED AND HALF-WITTED, WITH MY PEERS LOOKING UPON ME WITH PITY --!
'TWAS ONLY YESTERDAY I DID HEAR NEWS OF YOU -- HEAR THAT YOU WERE HALE AND HEARTY -- AND POSING AS A HERO -- A HERO!
I DID MAKE HASTE OUT HERE, AND FOLLOW YOU TO YOUR LAIR FROM YOUR BATTLE WITH THIS REGION'S SOLDIERY! AND YOU THINK TO APOLOGIZE?!
YOU ARE RIGHT, CRAVEN ONE. I ASSURE YOU --
IN THOR#7. LAST ISSUE -- Tom.

WHAM!
--YOUR APOLOGIES ARE INSUFFICIENT!
Uhh!
SSH
ATLAS!
Oh, TER-RIF-FIC!
HE -- HE WAS JUST --
YOU CAN'T --
HERE WE GO.
NOW LET ME THINK -- WHAT DO I KNOW ABOUT HERCULES --

HE WAS APOLOGIZING, YOU BIG DUMB OX! HE WAS APOLOGIZING --
-- AND YOU JUST --
Eh?
JOLT -- DON'T! DON'T DO ANYTHING -- YOU'LL JUST MAKE THINGS --
KZAM
AIIKH!
YOU DON'T HIT SOMEONE WHILE THEY'RE APOLOGIZING TO YOU!
"-- WORSE."
BAH!
NOW NOTHING, JERKULES! WHERE DO YOU GET OFF, THINKING YOU CAN TAKE ON ONE OF THE THUNDERBOLTS --
-- WITHOUT HIS PARTNERS DOING SOMETHING ABOUT IT?!
SONGBIRD SCREAMS --
-- AND HER BIONICALLY-ALTERED VOCAL CORDS INTERACT WITH THE SOPHISTICATED CIRCUITRY OF HER CARAPACE, TURNING THAT SCREAM --
-- INTO SOLID SOUND, STRONGER AND HARDER THAN STEEL --
WRAM
I WAS CONTENT JUST TO VISIT PUNISHMENT 'PON YOUR FELLOW, WENCH, BUT NOW --
KZAKK
UNHH!
STOP IT, ALL OF YOU! PULL BACK -- NOW!
LIKE THEY'RE LISTENIN'! WE HAD A CHANCE, BEFORE -- IF HERC TAGGED ATLAS AN' ATLAS DIDN'T FIGHT BACK. BUT THE WAY THINGS ARE GOIN' --

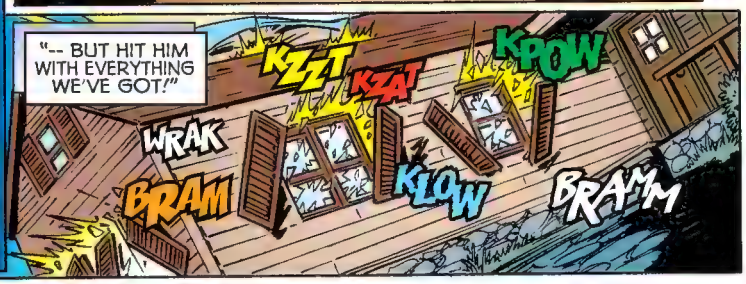
"-- HERC'S NOT GONNA STOP UNTIL HE'S *MOPPED THE FLOOR* WITH *ALL* THE T-BOLTS --!
Uhhh...
WHAT'S -- WHAT --
THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MOMENT, HERCULES -- *THINK!*
WORD'S BEEN SPREAD YOU'RE NOT AS *POWERFUL* AS YOU USED TO BE, THOUGH NOBODY KNOWS *WHY!* BUT STILL, THAT PUTS YOU AT *RISK* --
-- RISK OF *BRAIN DAMAGE* AGAIN! YOU DIDN'T LIKE THAT *BEFORE*, AND IF IT HAPPENS AGAIN --
SHUT UP AND *HIT* HIM, MOONSTONE! HE'S SHRUGGING OFF MY *BIO-JOLTS* AND SONGBIRD'S *SOUND-RAMS* --
-- LIKE THEY WEREN'T ANYTHING MORE THAN A *STIFF BREEZE!*
AYE, WOMAN! CEASE YOUR PRATTLE AND JOIN THE *FRAY* --
-- AND HERCULES SHALL *SHOW* YOU THAT YOUR MOST POWERFUL *BLOWS* HAVE AS LITTLE EFFECT AS YOUR *COWARDLY WORDS!*
YOU'RE *DEFENSIVE*, HERCULES. NOT AS CONFIDENT AS YOU'D *LIKE* TO BE?
DON'T *GOAD* HIM, MOONSTONE! FOR PETE'S SAKE, HE'S A *GREEK GOD!*
HE'S NOT GOING TO BACK DOWN FROM *THREE WOMEN!* YOU'RE JUST GOING TO GET HIM MADDER THAN HE ALREADY --


MOONSTONE!
KRAK
WHAMM
NNKH!

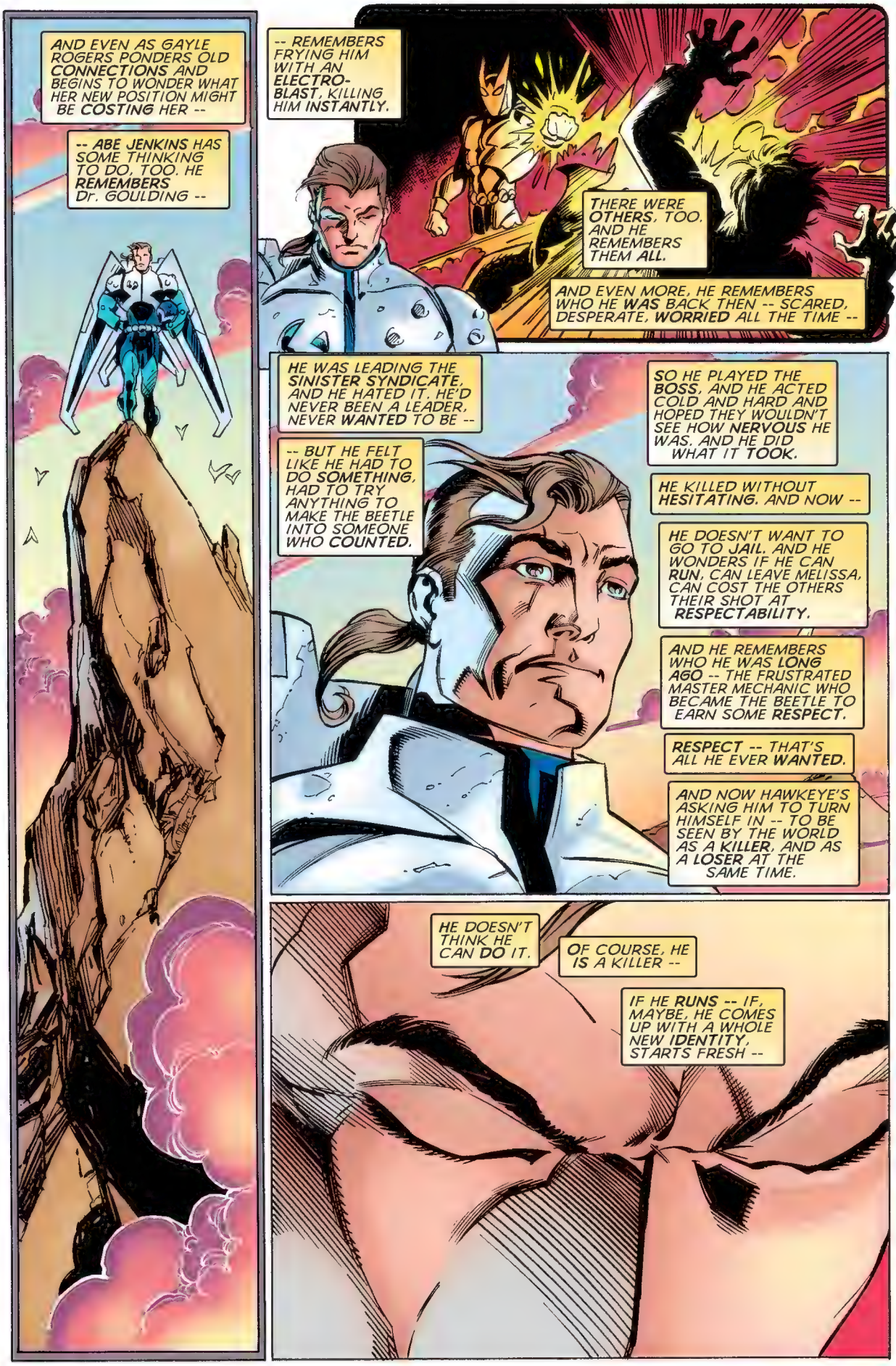

Oh, GREAT. HAWKEYE'S OUT *COLD*.
I WAS COUNTING ON HIM TO GET HERCULES UNDER *CONTROL* ONCE I'D MADE HIM *HESITATE*. NOTHING LEFT TO DO, THEN --

KZAK
HKKH!

PLOW
GHUHH!


"-- BUT HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT!"
KZZT
KZAT
KPOW
WRAK
BRAM
KLOW
BRAMM

MEANWHILE, IN DOWNTOWN DENVER --
-- IN THE LOCAL OFFICES OF THE NTN NETWORK --
WE MAY HAVE A BOMBSHELL HERE, Ms. ROGERS.
ONE OF OUR STRINGERS CAUGHT THIS PHOTO LAST NIGHT. I WANTED TO GET IT ON THE NEWS RIGHT AWAY --
-- BUT NEW YORK SAYS THIS WHOLE THUNDERBOLTS THING IS YOUR STORY, AND IT'S A RATINGS MAGNET -- THEY WANT TO BE CAREFUL HOW IT'S SPUN.
SO -- DO WE USE IT?
IT'S BLURRY -- I CAN'T MAKE IT OUT --
WE CAN DIGITALLY-ENHANCE IT. IN THE MEANTIME, USE THIS.
LAST ISSUE, FOR US -- -Tom
WHAT AM I LOOKING...
WHOA!
IT'S HAWKEYE! THEN HE'S THE ONE --
-- HE'S THE ONE WHO HELPED MACH-1 AND SONGBIRD ESCAPE FROM THE NATIONAL GUARD IN COPPERVALE! BUT -- WHY WOULD HE --?
THAT'S THE QUESTION OF THE HOUR, ALL RIGHT. YOU KNOW HAWKEYE, DON'T YOU?
YES -- I INTERVIEWED HIM ONCE OR TWICE, BACK WHEN HE WAS WITH THE WEST COAST AVENGERS.
SO -- DO WE USE THE PHOTO? AND IF SO --
IN SOLO AVENGERS #'s 9&13 -Tom.
"-- WHAT ANGLE DO WE PUT ON IT?"


AND EVEN AS GAYLE ROGERS PONDERS OLD CONNECTIONS AND BEGINS TO WONDER WHAT HER NEW POSITION MIGHT BE COSTING HER --
-- ABE JENKINS HAS SOME THINKING TO DO, TOO. HE REMEMBERS Dr. GOULDING --
-- REMEMBERS FRYING HIM WITH AN ELECTRO-BLAST, KILLING HIM INSTANTLY.
THERE WERE OTHERS, TOO. AND HE REMEMBERS THEM ALL.
AND EVEN MORE, HE REMEMBERS WHO HE WAS BACK THEN -- SCARED, DESPERATE, WORRIED ALL THE TIME --
HE WAS LEADING THE SINISTER SYNDICATE, AND HE HATED IT. HE'D NEVER BEEN A LEADER, NEVER WANTED TO BE --
-- BUT HE FELT LIKE HE HAD TO DO SOMETHING, HAD TO TRY ANYTHING TO MAKE THE BEETLE INTO SOMEONE WHO COUNTED.
SO HE PLAYED THE BOSS, AND HE ACTED COLD AND HARD AND HOPED THEY WOULDN'T SEE HOW NERVOUS HE WAS. AND HE DID WHAT IT TOOK.
HE KILLED WITHOUT HESITATING. AND NOW --
HE DOESN'T WANT TO GO TO JAIL. AND HE WONDERS IF HE CAN RUN, CAN LEAVE MELISSA, CAN COST THE OTHERS THEIR SHOT AT RESPECTABILITY.
AND HE REMEMBERS WHO HE WAS LONG AGO -- THE FRUSTRATED MASTER MECHANIC WHO BECAME THE BEETLE TO EARN SOME RESPECT.
RESPECT -- THAT'S ALL HE EVER WANTED.
AND NOW HAWKEYE'S ASKING HIM TO TURN HIMSELF IN -- TO BE SEEN BY THE WORLD AS A KILLER, AND AS A LOSER AT THE SAME TIME.
HE DOESN'T THINK HE CAN DO IT.
OF COURSE, HE IS A KILLER --
IF HE RUNS -- IF, MAYBE, HE COMES UP WITH A WHOLE NEW IDENTITY, STARTS FRESH --

KZAK
KTSH
JACKALS! SWINE!
UHH! MY -- MY SOUND-BANDS --!
YOU SWARM AT THE LION OF OLYMPUS, BITING AND SNARLING LIKE FERAL DOGS! BUT HERCULES SHALL BEST YOU ALL!
NO, HERCULES.
Eh --?
BLAM!
NNH!
STAY BACK, EVERYONE! HERCULES'S BEEF IS WITH ME -- AND ONLY ME! SO STAY OUT OF IT --
-- I'LL DEAL WITH HIM ALONE!
SO, MAN OF EARTH. YOU'VE FOUND YOUR COURAGE.
VERY WELL, THEN. I SHALL PUNISH THE OTHERS FOR THEIR PERFIDY LATER. BUT FOR NOW --

WRAK
--LET'S AT IT!
KRAM
BRAMM
I DID IT, HERCULES. I DID EVERYTHING YOU SAID I DID, AND THEN SOME. AND THERE'S NO WAY I CAN APOLOGIZE FOR IT, NO WAY TO TAKE IT BACK.
WHATEVER YOU WANT TO DISH OUT -- I DESERVE IT.
KROM

SPLAT!
YOU PROCLAIM YOUR GUILT WITH EVERY WORD YOU UTTER, GIANT!
BUT STILL YOU KEEP FIGHTING!
IT WILL CHANGE THE OUTCOME NOT A WHIT -- BUT WHY?
KLAM
I'M -- NO MATCH FOR YOU, HERCULES -- WE BOTH KNOW THAT --
BUT I'M NOT FIGHTING FOR ME -- I'M FIGHTING FOR THEM --
YOU WANT TO BEAT ME -- KILL ME -- FINE -- BUT LEAVE THEM OUT OF IT --
KRAK
YOU DO NOT TELL HERCULES WHAT HE SHALL DO! YOU ARE THE TRANSGRESSOR HERE! YOU ARE THE VILLAIN!
YOU'RE RIGHT -- I AM --
BUT I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU HURT THEM -- NOT GONNA LET YOU WRECK THEIR CHANCES BECAUSE OF WHAT I DID --
PFAH!
YOU HAVE NO SAY IN THE MATTER! HERCULES DOES --
WRAK
-- WHAT HERCULES CHOOSES!
Uhhh...
WH... WHAT..?

AND NOW, GIANT -- YOU ARE AT HERCULES'S MERCY!
AND NOW SHALL JUSTICE BE DONE!
F-FINE --
YOU WANT TO KILL ME -- GO AHEAD --
BUT LET IT END THERE -- LET IT --
SHKOOM
NO WAY!
WE'RE YOUR FRIENDS, ATLAS. YOUR TEAMMATES. THAT MEANS WE STAND BY YOU, WHATEVER COMES. NO MATTER HOW TOUGH IT GETS.
ABE! YOU'RE BACK!
YEAH -- AND READY TO TAKE MY LUMPS AS A THUNDERBOLT -- WHATEVER IT ENTAILS.
NO, ABE, NO --
I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO -- TRIED TO KEEP HIM FROM --
ERIK --!
BY -- MY -- MACE!
THERE IS NO HONOR IN YOU! IN ANY OF YOU!
YOU CALL SINGLE COMBAT, AND THEN VIOLATE IT! YOU ADMIT GUILT AND THEN DICTATE TERMS!
WELL, NO MORE! NO MORE! YOU HAVE INSULTED THE PRINCE OF POWER --

AND THE GRAVE SHALL BE YOUR REWARD!
STOP IT, HERC.
Eh?!
I'M NOT KIDDING AROUND HERE, HERC.
PUT THE BIG ROCK DOWN. NOW.
THIS IS THE SECOND TIME YOU HAVE STOOD BETWEEN ME AND MY FOES THIS DAY, HAWKEYE -- AND I WARN YOU, THERE SHALL NOT BE A THIRD.
STEP ASIDE.
SORRY, BIG GUY. NO CAN DO.
BEFORE YOU DROPPED IN, I GAVE THESE GUYS A SPEECH ABOUT KILLING. I SAID, MURDERERS DON'T GET TO BE AVENGERS -- DON'T GET TO BE HEROES.
AND IF YOU PROVE ME WRONG ON THIS, I'M GOING TO LOOK LIKE AN AWFUL CHUMP.
THESE GUYS HAVE BEEN BAD GUYS. NOBODY'S SAYING THEY WEREN'T. BUT THEY'RE CHANGING -- AND I'M GIVING THEM THE CHANCE TO DO IT.
SO YOU WANT TO KILL THE THUNDERBOLTS -- ANY OF 'EM YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH YOUR OLD PAL HAWKEYE TO DO IT.
HE'S --
HE'S PUTTING HIMSELF ON THE LINE --
-- FOR US --?

I WILL NOT WARN YOU AGAIN, ARCHER!
GET- OUT- OF- MY- WAY!
FINE!
SLAMM
FOR THE SAKE OF OUR LONG FRIENDSHIP, HAWKEYE, I WILL PUT AWAY MY RAGE -- AND I WILL GIVE THE LIVES OF THESE DOGS TO YOU.
BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE -- THAT FRIENDSHIP HAS JUST COME TO AN END. AND WHEN NEXT WE MEET --
-- IT SHALL BE AS THE BITTEREST OF FOES.

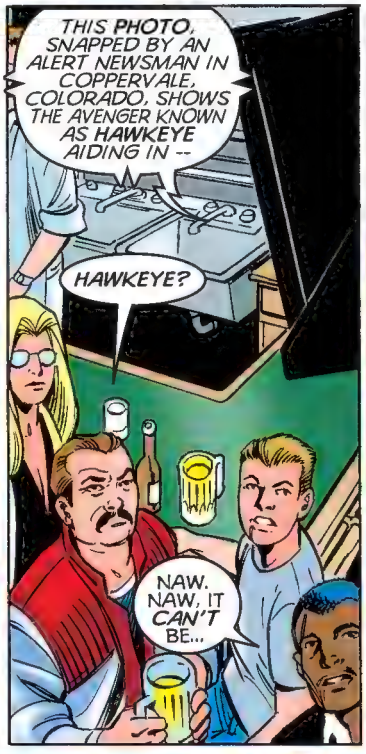
AND WITH THAT --
PHEW!
MAN, FOR A SECOND THERE, I DIDN'T THINK HE WAS GONNA --
Um, HAWKEYE --?
YEAH?
I JUST WANTED TO SAY -- THAT WAS INCREDIBLE --
I WOULD'VE RUN --
YOU KNOW, HAWKEYE, I USED TO THINK YOU WEREN'T MUCH BECAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE ANY POWERS.
BUT I COULD SEE HOW MAD HE WAS. AND TO TAKE THAT KIND OF RISK FOR A BUM LIKE ME -- A BUM THAT'S TRIED TO KILL YOU MORE'N ONCE --
-- WELL, I WAS WRONG ABOUT YOU. BIG TIME.
DON'T SWEAT IT, GUY. IT'S JUST THE WAY THE GAME'S PLAYED.
IT'S REALLY NOT THAT HARD. KNOWIN' WHAT TO DO -- THE TRICK IS DOIN' IT BEFORE YOU MANAGE TO TALK YOURSELF OUT OF IT.
JUST PROVE ME RIGHT ABOUT YOU, AND WE'LL BE SQUARE.
Hmmm. COULD HAWKEYE HAVE SET THIS UP -- STAGED THIS DELIBERATELY WITH HERCULES, JUST TO WIN US OVER? NO, I DOUBT IT --
-- HERCULES ISN'T THAT GOOD AN ACTOR, EVEN IF HAWKEYE WAS SMART ENOUGH TO TRY IT.
BUT STILL, HE'LL BEAR WATCHING -- CAREFUL WATCHING...

IF WE'RE GOING TO PROVE YOU *RIGHT*, HAWKEYE -- WE MIGHT AS WELL START WITH *ME*.
I CAME BACK TO TELL YOU MY *DECISION*, AND WHAT I SAW HERE JUST CONFIRMS IT. IF YOU'RE WILLING TO RISK YOUR *LIFE* TO GIVE US A CHANCE --
-- THEN I CAN DO WHAT'S *RIGHT*, TOO.
ABE, ARE YOU *SURE* --?
I'M *SURE*, MELISSA. YOU TELL ME WHAT TO *DO*, HAWKEYE, AND I'LL DO IT.
I'LL *TURN* MYSELF *IN*.
YOU'RE MAKING THE *RIGHT CHOICE*, MACH-1 -- ABE.
THIS'LL BE A BIG STEP IN SHOWING THE WORLD THAT YOU'VE *CHANGED* --
-- THAT THE *T-BOLTS* HAVE CHANGED. IT'LL MAKE IT EASIER FOR *EVERYONE*.
I... I *HOPE* SO.
AND, THAT NIGHT...
YOU'RE REALLY GOING TO DO IT, ABE? GO TO *JAIL*?
YEAH -- BUT I'LL BE *BACK*, MELISSA. I'M *STILL* YOUR GUY -- AND I'LL NEVER *LEAVE* YOU, NOT THE WAY IT *COUNTS*.
BUT THIS IS SOMETHING I'VE *GOT* TO DO TO BE THE KIND OF GUY WHO *DESERVES* YOU.
HAWKEYE'LL MAKE THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY *SURRENDER*, SO REPORTERS ARE THERE TO *COVER* IT, SO NOTHING GOES *WRONG* --

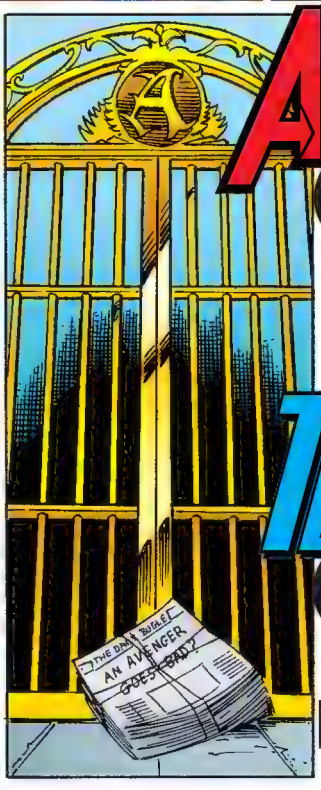
-- AND SO IT'S CLEAR TO EVERYONE THAT I'M COMING IN VOLUNTARILY. THAT'LL MEAN A LOT, FOR YOU AND THE OTHERS.
BUT ABE -- IT'LL BE YEARS -- AND THE THINGS THAT COULD HAPPEN --
I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, ABE. WE COULD RUN -- NOW, TONIGHT -- AND START A NEW LIFE. NO COSTUMES, NO POWERS -- JUST THE TWO OF US.
I'D LOVE TO, BABE. BUT IT'D BE A MISTAKE.
YOU'VE GOT A CHANCE HERE -- TO CLEAN THE SLATE, TO WIN YOURSELF A FRESH START. FOR YOURSELF, FOR EVERYONE.
THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO JAIL -- TO MAKE SURE HAWKEYE GETS TO GIVE YOU THAT CHANCE.
BESIDES, HE'S RIGHT. I DID KILL THAT DOCTOR, AND SOME OTHERS. I SHOULD PAY FOR IT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT MOONSTONE, THEN? SHE'S NOT GOING TO JAIL -- SHE'S NOT PAYING FOR ANYTHING! IF HAWKEYE KNEW --
YOU CAN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THAT, MELISSA -- YOU CAN'T. IF IT COMES OUT, IT'LL BLOW EVERYONE'S CHANCE --
-- MAKE WHAT I'M DOING MEANINGLESS!
BUT -- IT'S NOT FAIR! IF SHE GETS AWAY WITH --
YOU'VE GOT TO PROMISE ME, HONEY. PROMISE ME YOU WON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT KOSMOS -- ABOUT MOONSTONE KILLING THE KING --
I... I PROMISE...

AND THEN THERE ARE NO MORE WORDS, OR NEED FOR ANY --
-- BUT FOR A MOMENT, SONGBIRD THINKS SHE HEARS, FAINTLY ON THE WIND, AN ECHO OF WHAT HAWKEYE SAID EARLIER --
"-- IT'S REALLY NOT THAT HARD, KNOWIN' WHAT TO DO -- THE TRICK IS DOIN' IT BEFORE YOU MANAGE TO TALK YOURSELF OUT OF IT..."

GOOD EVENING, AMERICA. THIS IS GAYLE ROGERS, WITH AN NTN THUNDERWATCH BULLETIN.
FOR WEEKS NOW, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WONDERING WHETHER THE SUPER-VILLAINS KNOWN AS THE THUNDERBOLTS HAVE BECOME HEROES --
NTN
-- BUT NOW PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE HAS COME TO LIGHT THAT ASKS ANOTHER QUESTION: HAS A HERO GONE BAD?


THIS PHOTO, SNAPPED BY AN ALERT NEWSMAN IN COPPERVALE, COLORADO, SHOWS THE AVENGER KNOWN AS HAWKEYE AIDING IN --
HAWKEYE?
NAW. NAW, IT CAN'T BE...

AND QUICKLY, THE NEWS SPREADS -- FROM NETWORK, TO TELEVISION TO RADIO.
--AIDING IN THE ESCAPE OF TWO OF THE FUGITIVE THUNDERBOLTS FROM A NATIONAL GUARD BLOCKADE --



NEXT in AVENGERS #12

IT'S THE REMATCH OF THE CENTURY, WHEN THE AVENGERS COME LOOKING FOR HAWKEYE -- AND GO TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE THUNDERBOLTS!

NEXT MONTH in THUNDERBOLTS #23

IT'S TIME FOR MACH-1 TO TURN HIMSELF IN -- THAT IS, IF THERE'S ANYONE LEFT AFTER THE AVENGERS ISH!

BE HERE!

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Captain America
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CITIZEN V
A BATTLE 55 YEARS IN THE MAKING -- AGAINST THE POWER OF BARON ZEMO!
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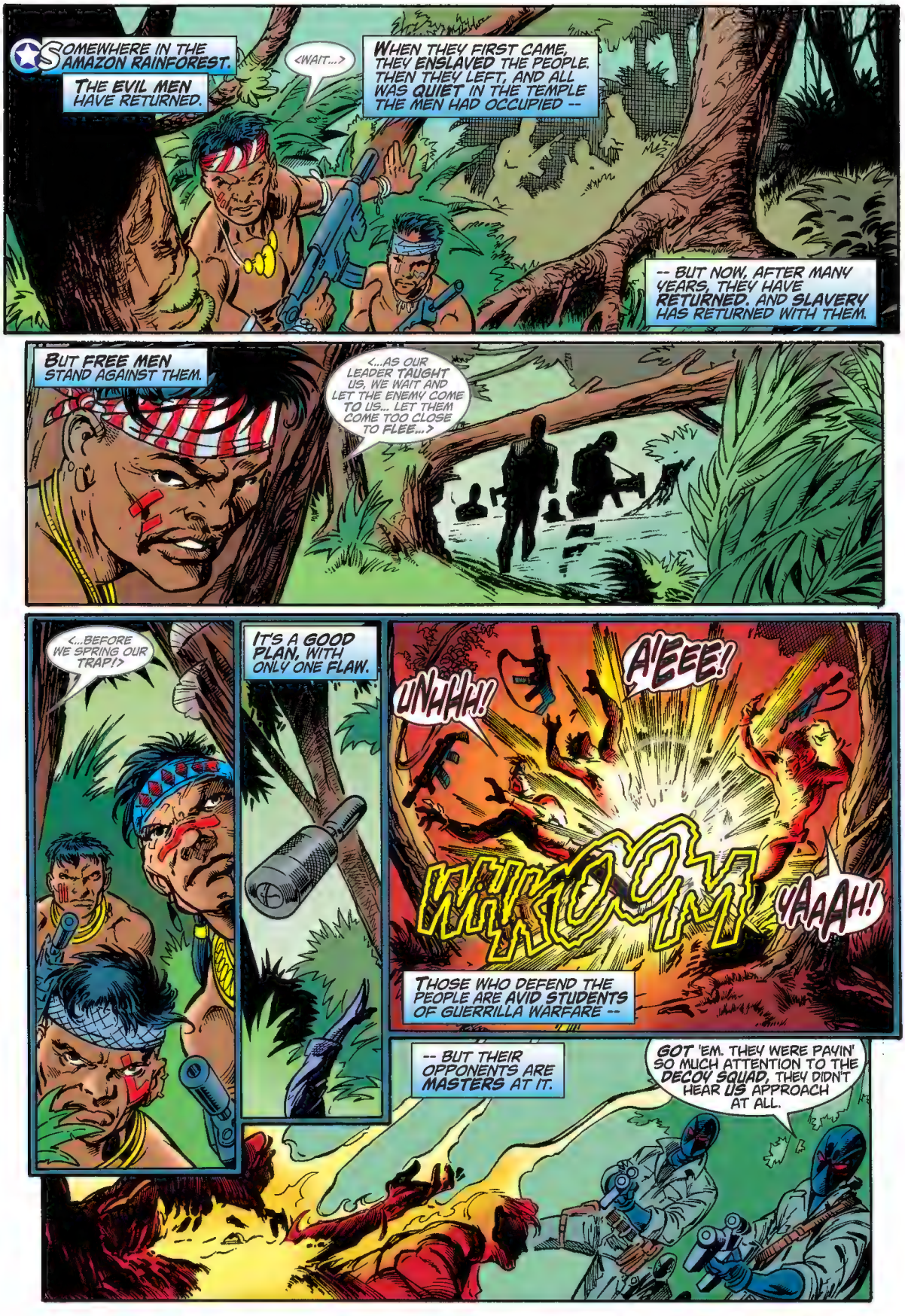

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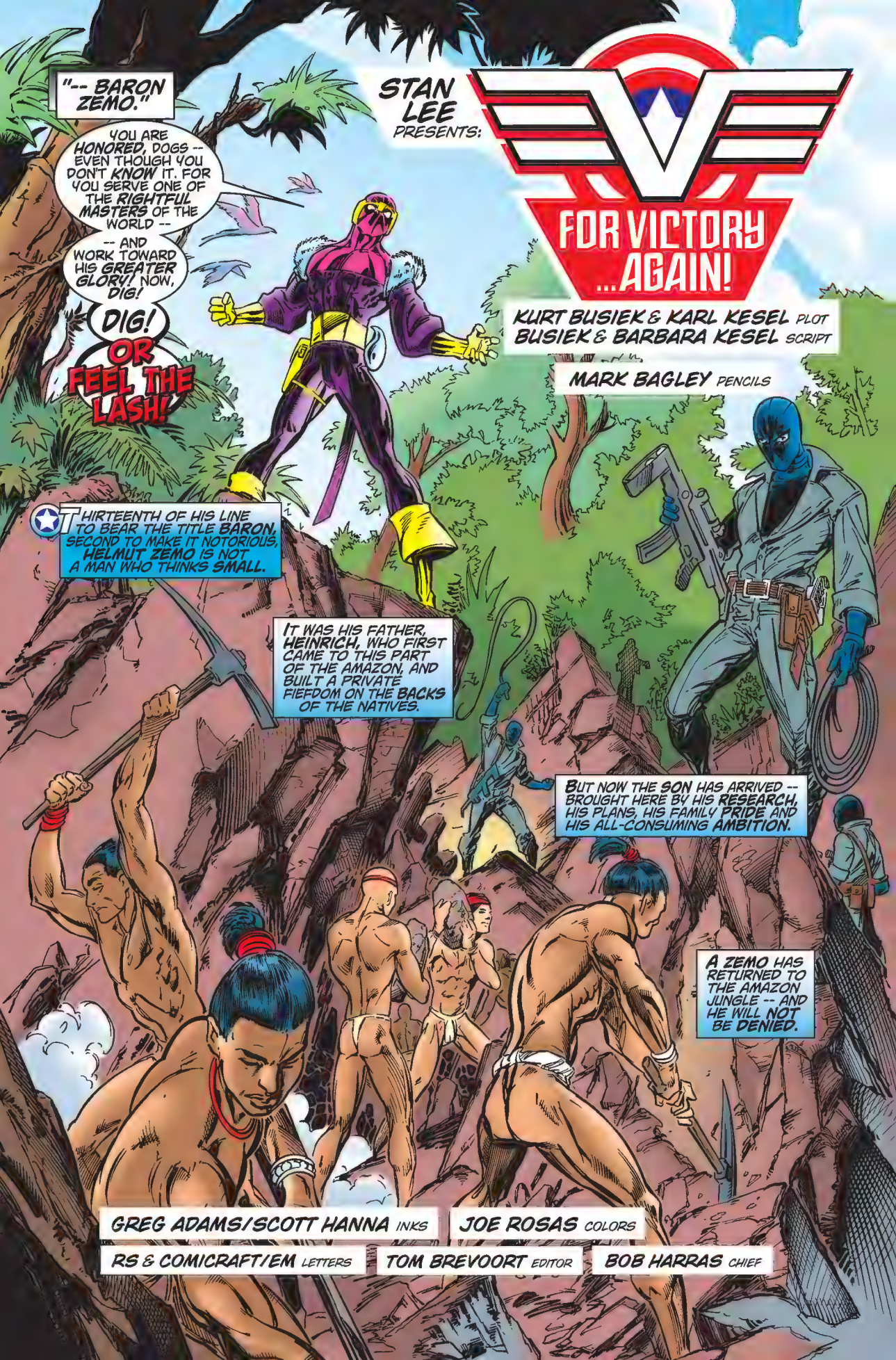
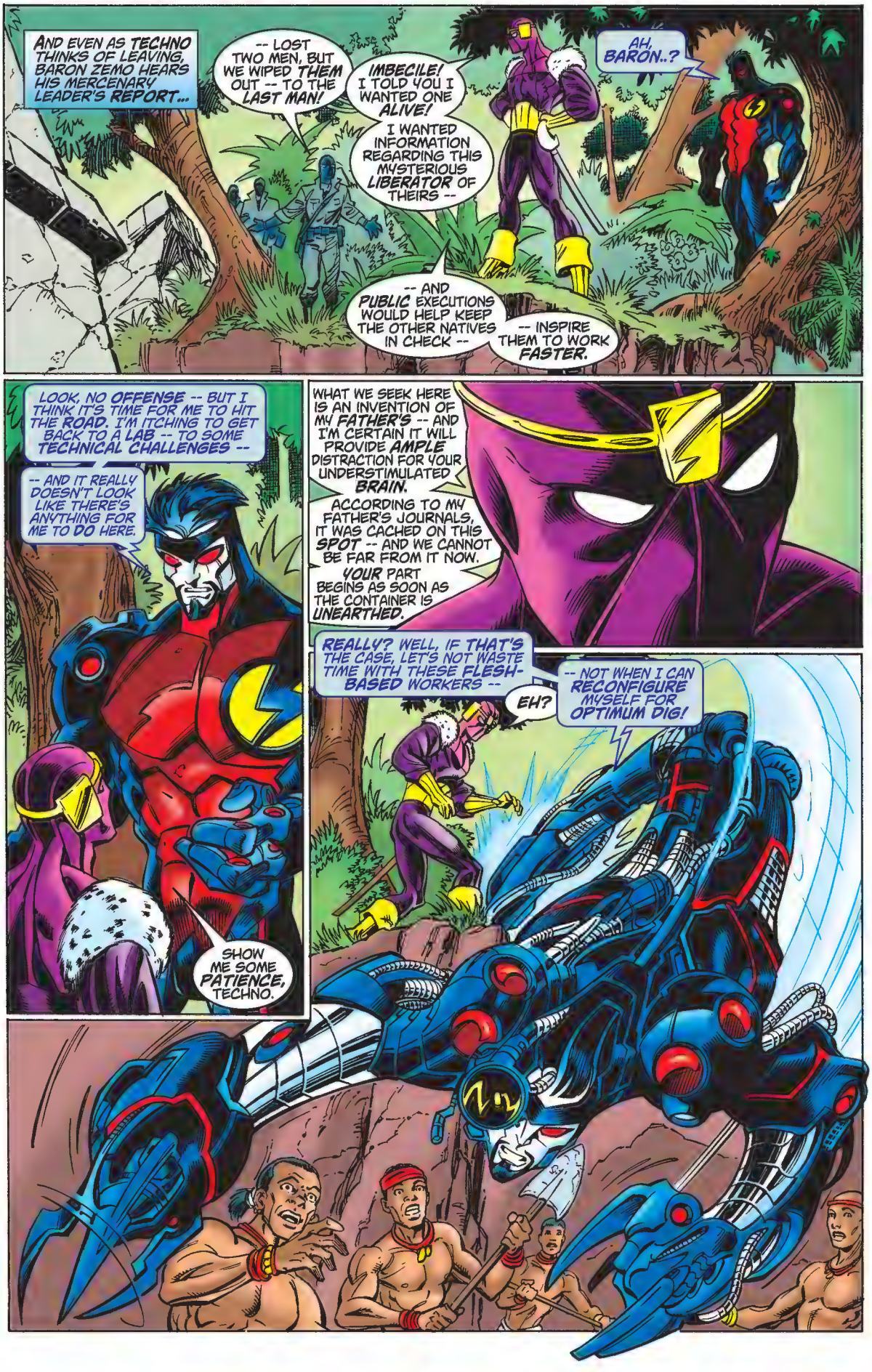
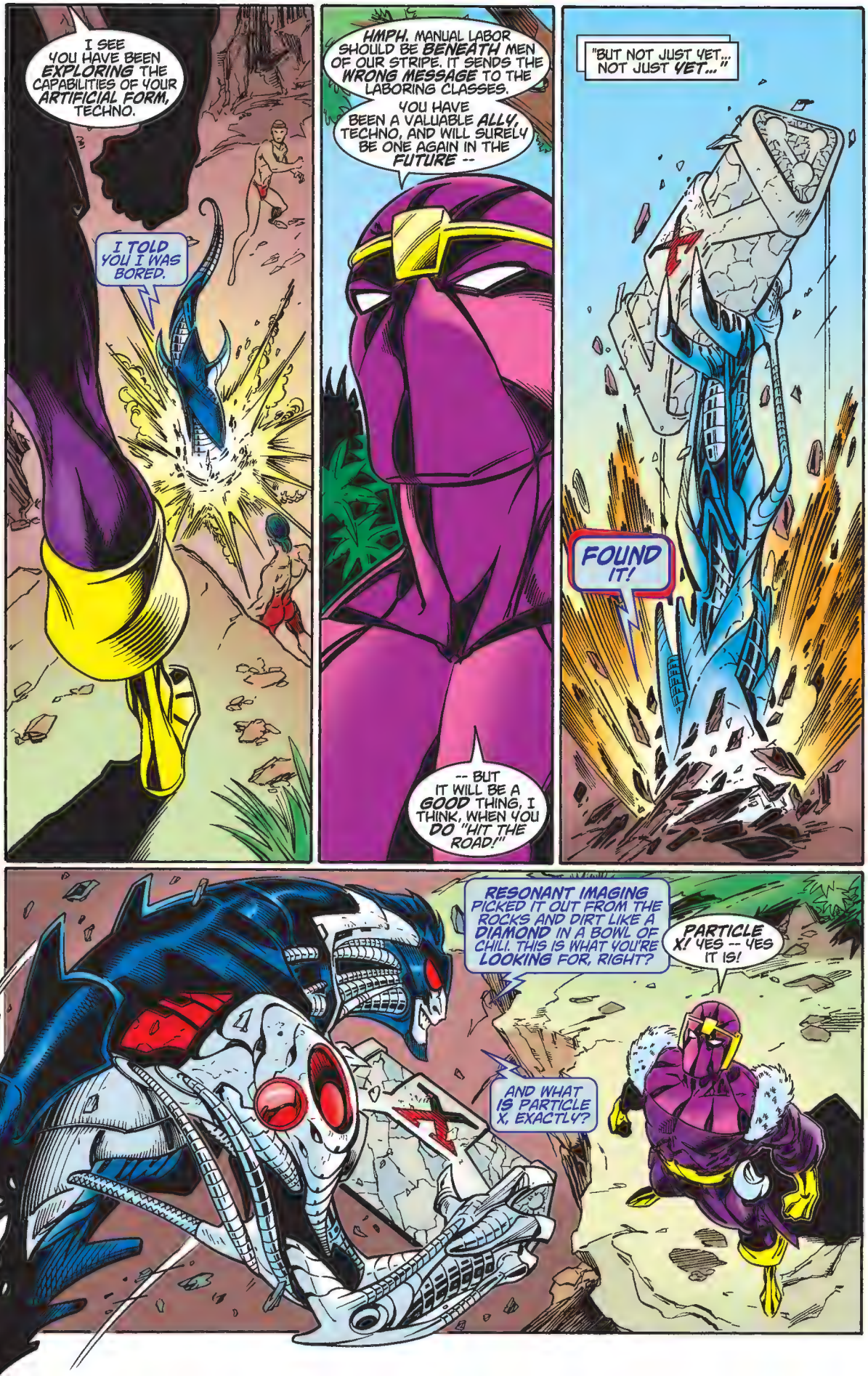
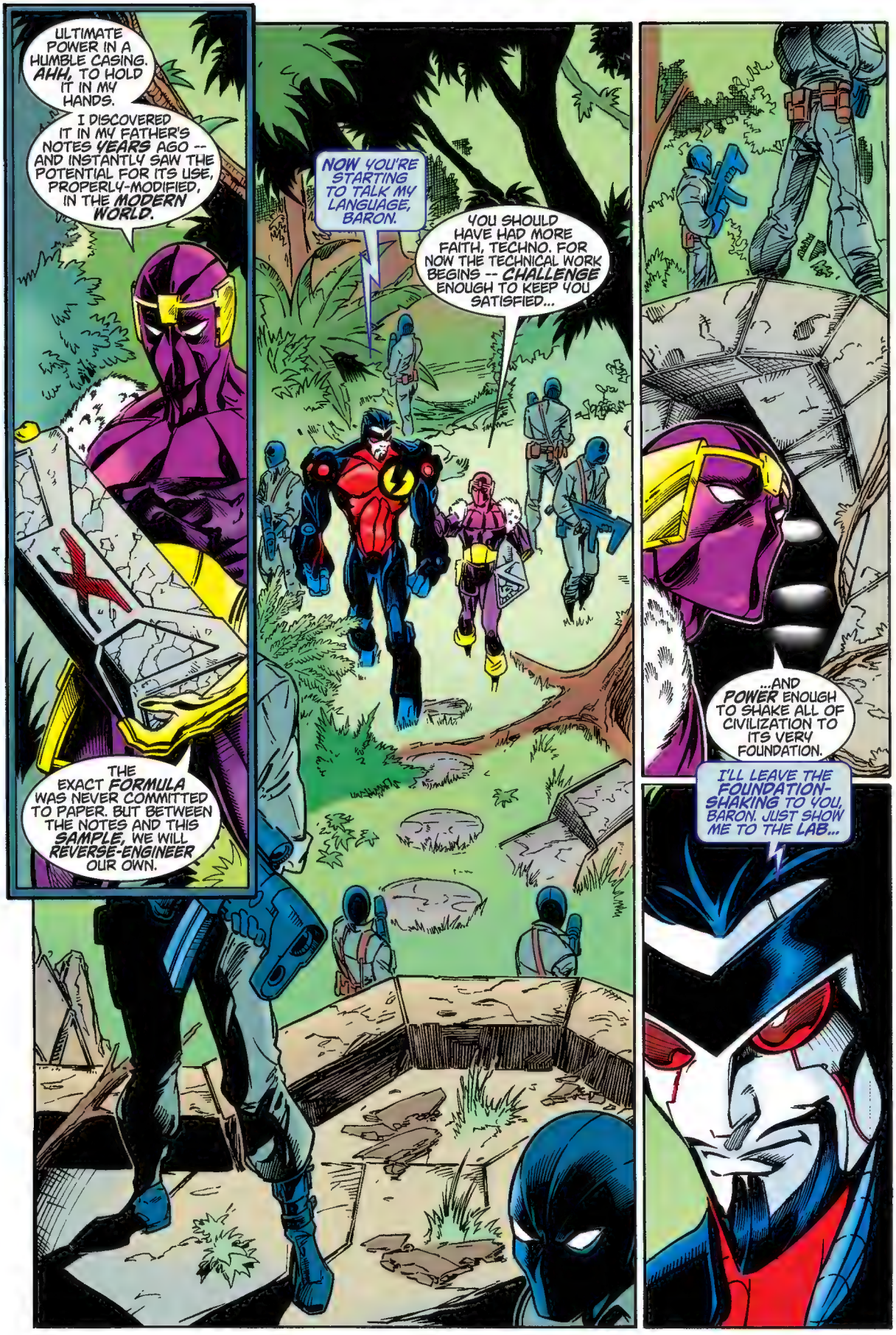
HEAD COUNT, ANDERS.
THREE... FOUR... LOOKS LIKE WE MIGHT'VE MISSED A COUPLE OF --
-- LOOK OUT!
THEY HAD HUNG BACK, THESE TWO -- FOLLOWING THEIR LEADER'S ADVICE NEVER TO CLUSTER TOO CLOSE TOGETHER. BUT NOW --
BRAKKAK
BRAKKAK
-- ALL THEY WANT TO DO IS KILL. TO PAY THE INVADERS BACK FOR WHAT THEY'VE DONE TO THEIR BRETHREN... THEIR FRIENDS.
BUT THE ENEMY RESPONDS IN KIND, AND WHEN THE STACCATO BURSTS OF GUNFIRE FADE OFF INTO THE USUAL FOREST SOUNDS...
GHUHH!
BRAMM BRAMM BRAMM
BRAKK
...IT IS THE INTRUDERS WHO HAVE WON THE DAY.
THAT ALL OF 'EM?
ONE'S STILL WITH US.
<TELL US WHERE YOU AND YOUR FIGHTER FRIENDS LIVE, BUDDY...>
<I WILL TELL YOU NOTHING, PIG. NOTHING BUT THE WORDS OF MY LEADER...>
VICTORY... OR DEATH.
DEATH IT IS.
IDIOTS, WASTING OUR TIME, WASTING OUR MEN -- WHEN THEY'VE GOT TO KNOW THE OUTCOME'S INEVITABLE. YOU CAN'T FIGHT PROGRESS --
-- AND PROGRESS SAYS THIS JUNGLE, AND EVERYTHING IN IT, IS NOW THE PROPERTY OF --
BRAKK

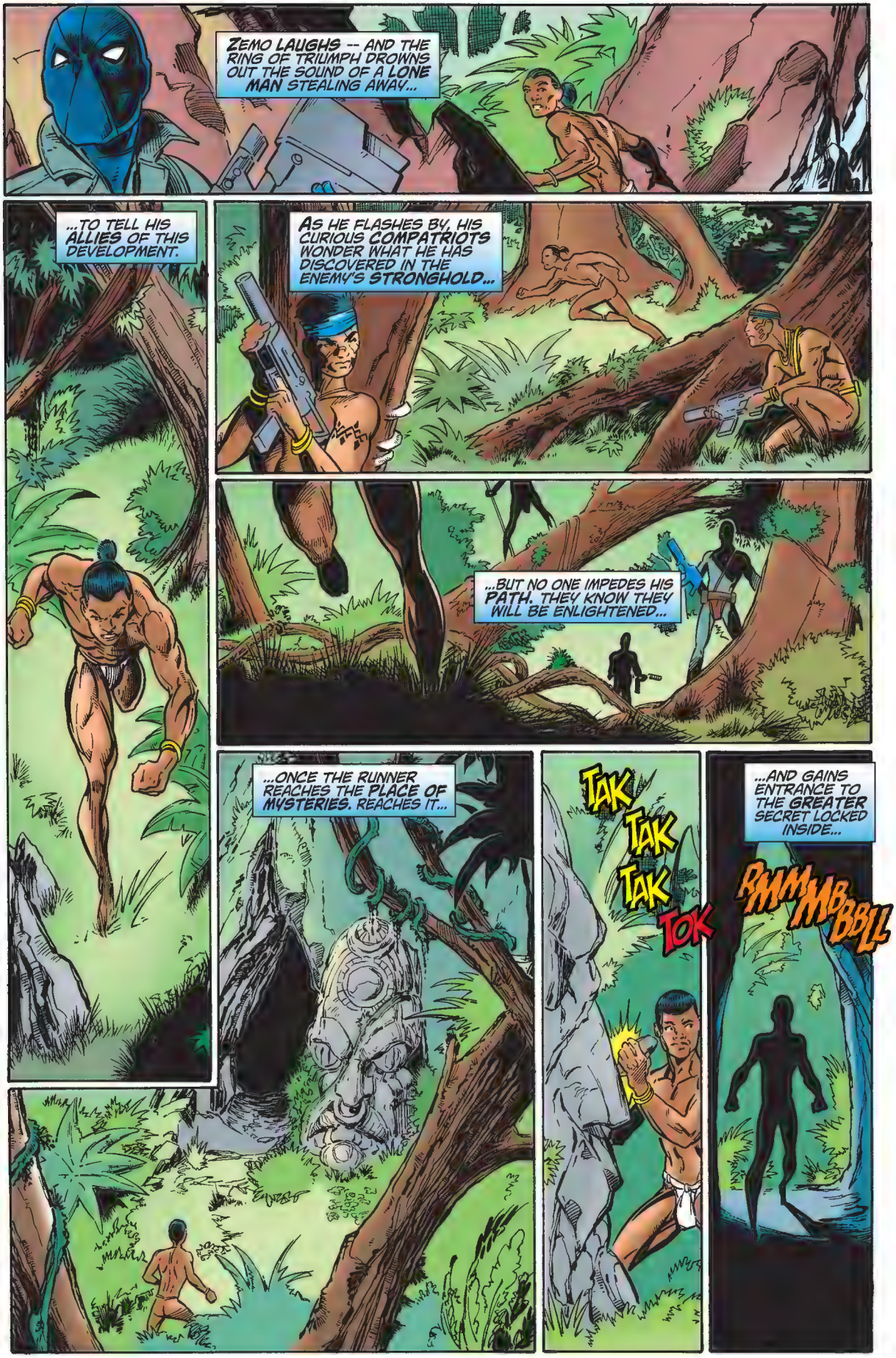

"-- BARON ZEMO."
YOU ARE HONORED, DOGS -- EVEN THOUGH YOU DON'T KNOW IT, FOR YOU SERVE ONE OF THE RIGHTFUL MASTERS OF THE WORLD --
-- AND WORK TOWARD HIS GREATER GLORY! NOW, DIG!
DIG! OR FEEL THE LASH!
STAN LEE PRESENTS:
V
FOR VICTORY ...AGAIN!
KURT BUSIEK & KARL KESEL PLOT
BUSIEK & BARBARA KESEL SCRIPT
MARK BAGLEY PENCILS
THIRTEENTH OF HIS LINE TO BEAR THE TITLE BARON, SECOND TO MAKE IT NOTORIOUS, HELMUT ZEMO IS NOT A MAN WHO THINKS SMALL.
IT WAS HIS FATHER, HEINRICH, WHO FIRST CAME TO THIS PART OF THE AMAZON, AND BUILT A PRIVATE FIEFDOM ON THE BACKS OF THE NATIVES.
BUT NOW THE SON HAS ARRIVED -- BROUGHT HERE BY HIS RESEARCH, HIS PLANS, HIS FAMILY PRIDE AND HIS ALL-CONSUMING AMBITION.
A ZEMO HAS RETURNED TO THE AMAZON JUNGLE -- AND HE WILL NOT BE DENIED.
GREG ADAMS/SCOTT HANNA INKS
JOE ROSAS COLORS
RS & COMICRAFT/EM LETTERS
TOM BREVOORT EDITOR
BOB HARRAS CHIEF

LOOK AT HIM. LORDING IT OVER THEM LIKE HE'S HAVING THE TIME OF HIS LIFE. AND HE PROBABLY IS.
THIS IS JUST HIS KIND OF THING. BUT IT'S NOT MINE.
THIS ISN'T WHERE I THOUGHT THIS CAPER WOULD LEAD...
"...WHEN THE BARON RECRUITED ME TO PLAY HERO AS ONE OF THE THUNDERBOLTS.* IT WAS A GOOD SCAM. AT FIRST --
"-- BUT THE OTHERS SKIPPED OUT ON A CHANCE TO RULE THE WORLD,** EVEN HELPING BEAT US. THAT PUT 'EM ON THE BARON'S 'BAD DOG' LIST...
THUNDERBOLTS '97. T-BOLTS #10-12 -- see last issue Brevoort.
"...AND HIS MOOD DIDN'T EXACTLY IMPROVE WHEN A NEW CITIZEN V SHOWED UP.
"IT MUST'VE BEEN MADDENING. ZEMO HAD POSED AS CITIZEN V -- AS THE DESCENDANT OF A DEAD WORLD WAR II HERO --
"-- BUT THEN A NEW ONE APPEARS, CLAIMING TO BE THE DESCENDANT ZEMO ONLY PRETENDED TO BE --
"-- AND BLOWS UP THE BARON'S MEXICAN CASTLE REAL GOOD.*
"I WAS STILL INSIDE AT THE TIME, TRYING TO REBOOT AND REPAIR MY ROBOTIC BODY WHILE HOLDING UP TEN TONS OF RUBBLE...
In T-BOLTS #17 -- Tom.
"...AND THE BARON DUG ME OUT AND PATCHED ME UP. SO I GUESS I OWE HIM -- AND THAT'S WHY I'VE STUCK BY HIM ON THIS LITTLE JAUNT."
BUT GRATITUDE ONLY GOES SO FAR -- AND THIS JUNGLE-EMPEROR SCHTICK IS GETTING OLD REALLLL FAST..!


AND EVEN AS TECHNO THINKS OF LEAVING, BARON ZEMO HEARS HIS MERCENARY LEADER'S REPORT...
-- LOST TWO MEN, BUT WE WIPED THEM OUT -- TO THE LAST MAN!
IMBECILE! I TOLD YOU I WANTED ONE ALIVE!
I WANTED INFORMATION REGARDING THIS MYSTERIOUS LIBERATOR OF THEIRS --
AH, BARON..?
-- AND PUBLIC EXECUTIONS WOULD HELP KEEP THE OTHER NATIVES IN CHECK --
-- INSPIRE THEM TO WORK FASTER.
LOOK, NO OFFENSE -- BUT I THINK IT'S TIME FOR ME TO HIT THE ROAD. I'M ITCHING TO GET BACK TO A LAB -- TO SOME TECHNICAL CHALLENGES --
-- AND IT REALLY DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THERE'S ANYTHING FOR ME TO DO HERE.
SHOW ME SOME PATIENCE, TECHNO.
WHAT WE SEEK HERE IS AN INVENTION OF MY FATHER'S -- AND I'M CERTAIN IT WILL PROVIDE AMPLE DISTRACTION FOR YOUR UNDERSTIMULATED BRAIN.
ACCORDING TO MY FATHER'S JOURNALS, IT WAS CACHED ON THIS SPOT -- AND WE CANNOT BE FAR FROM IT NOW.
YOUR PART BEGINS AS SOON AS THE CONTAINER IS UNEARTHED.
REALLY? WELL, IF THAT'S THE CASE, LET'S NOT WASTE TIME WITH THESE FLESH-BASED WORKERS --
EH?
-- NOT WHEN I CAN RECONFIGURE MYSELF FOR OPTIMUM DIG!


I SEE YOU HAVE BEEN EXPLORING THE CAPABILITIES OF YOUR ARTIFICIAL FORM, TECHNO.
I TOLD YOU I WAS BORED.
HMPH. MANUAL LABOR SHOULD BE BENEATH MEN OF OUR STRIPE. IT SENDS THE WRONG MESSAGE TO THE LABORING CLASSES.
YOU HAVE BEEN A VALUABLE ALLY, TECHNO, AND WILL SURELY BE ONE AGAIN IN THE FUTURE --
-- BUT IT WILL BE A GOOD THING, I THINK, WHEN YOU DO "HIT THE ROAD!"
"BUT NOT JUST YET... NOT JUST YET..."
FOUND IT!
RESONANT IMAGING PICKED IT OUT FROM THE ROCKS AND DIRT LIKE A DIAMOND IN A BOWL OF CHILI. THIS IS WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR, RIGHT?
PARTICLE X! YES -- YES IT IS!
AND WHAT IS PARTICLE X, EXACTLY?


ULTIMATE POWER IN A HUMBLE CASING. AHH, TO HOLD IT IN MY HANDS.
I DISCOVERED IT IN MY FATHER'S NOTES YEARS AGO -- AND INSTANTLY SAW THE POTENTIAL FOR ITS USE, PROPERLY-MODIFIED, IN THE MODERN WORLD.
THE EXACT FORMULA WAS NEVER COMMITTED TO PAPER. BUT BETWEEN THE NOTES AND THIS SAMPLE, WE WILL REVERSE-ENGINEER OUR OWN.
NOW YOU'RE STARTING TO TALK MY LANGUAGE, BARON.
YOU SHOULD HAVE HAD MORE FAITH, TECHNO. FOR NOW THE TECHNICAL WORK BEGINS -- CHALLENGE ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU SATISFIED...
...AND POWER ENOUGH TO SHAKE ALL OF CIVILIZATION TO ITS VERY FOUNDATION.
I'LL LEAVE THE FOUNDATION-SHAKING TO YOU, BARON. JUST SHOW ME TO THE LAB...


ZEMO LAUGHS -- AND THE RING OF TRIUMPH DROWNS OUT THE SOUND OF A LONE MAN STEALING AWAY...
...TO TELL HIS ALLIES OF THIS DEVELOPMENT.
AS HE FLASHES BY, HIS CURIOUS COMPATRIOTS WONDER WHAT HE HAS DISCOVERED IN THE ENEMY'S STRONGHOLD...
...BUT NO ONE IMPEDES HIS PATH. THEY KNOW THEY WILL BE ENLIGHTENED...
...ONCE THE RUNNER REACHES THE PLACE OF MYSTERIES. REACHES IT...
TAK
TAK
TAK
TOK
...AND GAINS ENTRANCE TO THE GREATER SECRET LOCKED INSIDE...
RMMMMBBBLL

...THE HIDDEN HEADQUARTERS OF THE RESISTANCE, WHERE THEIR NEW LEADER TEACHES THEM THE WAYS OF MODERN WAR.
THEIR NEW LEADER -- CITIZEN V!
ZEMO'S MERCS TOOK OUT OUR LEAD SCOUTS.
I KNOW WE WANT NO LOSSES. THEY'D AGREED TO WAIT, BUT THEY GOT AHEAD OF THE PLAN AND THEY PAID FOR THAT ENTHUSIASM!
WE'VE GOT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ZEMO'S PLANS, AND SOON.
AH -- EXCUSE ME, SIR, BUT TO WHOM DO YOU SPEAK?
I'M... JUST THINKING OUT LOUD.
CITIZEN V! I HAVE NEWS!
HM?
WELL, DON'T STAND ON CEREMONY, YOUNG MAN. LET'S HEAR IT!
THEY TOOK FROM THE GROUND A METAL BOX. THE PARTICLE X, THEY CALL IT!
PARTICLE X?!

BLAST IT! THAT MEANS --
SIR! SIR! PAOLO WAS FOLLOWED! IT IS ONLY ONE MAN -- BUT HE IS A TIGER! OUR SENTRIES CANNOT STOP HIM!
MAYBE IT IS ZEMO HIMSELF!
IF IT IS, YOU JUST LEAVE HIM TO ME --
-- I'VE BEEN WANTING ANOTHER SHOT AT THAT MADMAN.
YOU WON'T GET AWAY FROM ME THIS TIME!
I'M NOT TRYING TO.

GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT, ZEMO -- AND WE'LL SEE WHO GETS AWAY FROM WHOM!
CAPTAIN AMERICA?!
KTANGG

CAPTAIN, WAIT! I'M --
-- I'M CITIZEN V! WE HAVE NO REASON TO --
STOW IT, ZEMO! THE THUNDERBOLTS CHARADE IS OVER -- AND THE WORLD KNOWS WHO YOU REALLY ARE!
NOW, FIRST THINGS FIRST. YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD WITH THAT SWORD, AS I RECALL --
-- SO LET'S TAKE IT AWAY FROM YOU!
PTAK
CAPTAIN AMERICA FROWNS. HE HADN'T EXPECTED THAT MOVE TO WORK -- NOT AGAINST ZEMO. AND THERE'S SOMETHING --
WAIT -- THE WAY YOU MOVE -- YOUR STANCE --
CITIZEN V REACTS WITH A SUPPLE GRACE -- RECOVERING FROM THE ATTACK AND STRIKING OUTWARD, ALL IN ONE SMOOTH MOTION.
CLEARLY AN OPPONENT TO BE RECKONED WITH, CAPTAIN AMERICA REALIZES -- BUT NOT THE ONE HE'D EXPECTED.
YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE, CAPTAIN.

ALL RIGHT, SO YOU'RE NOT ZEMO. BUT YOU'RE STILL TOO CAPABLE A FOE TO TAKE LESS THAN SERIOUSLY --
-- SO BEFORE I GET TO THE BOTTOM OF ALL THIS --
-- I'M TAKING YOU DOWN!
CAPTAIN AMERICA'S CHARGE HAS BEEN LIKENED TO A FREIGHT TRAIN. IT'S DESIGNED TO INTIMIDATE -- TO MAKE AN ENEMY FREEZE IN HIS TRACKS --
-- OR FAILING THAT, TO BOLT FOR COVER, LEAVING HIMSELF VULNERABLE. BUT CITIZEN V MERELY WAITS, POISED LIGHTLY --
-- AND AT THE LAST MOMENT, TWISTS, SIDE-STEPPING UNDER THE FORCE OF THE BLOW --
-- AND RABBIT-PUNCHING A LEFT TO HIS ASSAILANT'S RIBS AS THEY'RE BORNE THROUGH THE AIR.
STILL, CAPTAIN AMERICA'S YEARS OF EXPERIENCE HAVE STOOD HIM IN GOOD STEAD BEFORE, AND DO SO AGAIN. WHEN THE TWO LAND --
HALT! OR WE WILL KILL --
NO! CAPTAIN AMERICA SAVED US FROM THE FIRST BARON ZEMO!
AS CITIZEN V WILL SAVE US FROM THIS ONE!
HM? SAVE YOU?
HOLD YOUR FIRE! THIS MAN ISN'T OUR ENEMY!

AS I WAS SAYING, CAPTAIN... I AM CITIZEN V. A NEW ONE. NOT BARON ZEMO.
NOW IF YOU'D BE SO GOOD AS TO GET OFF ME?
I'M... VERY SORRY, CITIZEN V. MAY I OFFER MY APOLOGIES..?
S.H.I.E.L.D.'S© SATELLITE IMAGING SYSTEM INDICATED NEW ACTIVITY IN THE VICINITY OF THE ORIGINAL BARON ZEMO'S OLD HEADQUARTERS.
I CAME TO INVESTIGATE -- SAW YOUR MAN AND FOLLOWED HIM, AND --
UNDERSTOOD.
Strategic Hazard Intervention Espionage Logistics Directorate -- Tom
ACCEPTED. IT'S GOOD TO KNOW YOU SHARE MY DETERMINATION TO STOP BARON ZEMO...
EVEN IF I COULD HAVE USED LESS SHARING...
THE SATELLITE WAS CORRECT -- ZEMO'S BEEN QUITE BUSY LATELY. I'LL GIVE YOU A FULL REPORT LATER. BUT FIRST --
-- TELL ME, CAPTAIN, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PARTICLE X?
PARTICLE X? IS THAT WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT?
I HAVEN'T HEARD THOSE WORDS IN A LONG TIME...
...NOT SINCE I FOUGHT A DIFFERENT BARON ZEMO...
...ALONGSIDE THE ORIGINAL CITIZEN V...

"IT WAS BACK DURING WORLD WAR II. ALL WE KNEW WAS THAT ZEMO WAS ABOUT TO UNLEASH SOME SORT OF SECRET WEAPON --
" -- AND WE HAD TO FIND A WAY TO GET ALLIED TROOPS INTO HIS FORTRESS TO STOP HIM.
"WE BEING ME AND MY YOUNG PARTNER, BUCKY.
"COMPANY C WAS WAITING IN THE FOREST. BUCKY AND I TOOK THE POINT --
"-- AND EVEN OVER THE GUNFIRE, WE COULD HEAR ZEMO'S BOOMING VOICE..."
VICTORY IS MINE! THE ALLIES WILL NEVER BREACH MY DEFENSES BEFORE WE FIRE THE ROCKET!
SOON, ITS CARGO OF PARTICLE X WILL BE DISPERSED INTO THE AIR OVER LONDON!
THANKS TO THE WAVE-NULLIFYING PROPERTIES OF MY GREATEST DISCOVERY, ALL RADIO AND RADAR OPERATING IN BRITAIN WILL BE JAMMED -- USELESS!
THE ALLIED HIGH COMMAND WILL BE STRUCK DEAF AND BLIND!
AND THEN, AS THEY LAY HELPLESS, WE WILL STRIKE!
WHEN THEY AWAKEN, THEY WILL BE SURROUNDED -- BY THE FORCES OF THE THIRD REICH!
YOU ARE AS FIERCE AS YOU ARE CLEVER, HEINRICH.
BUT DON'T DISTRACT ME FROM MY FUN -- I'VE GOT CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BUCKY IN MY SIGHTS!
HAVE YOUR SPORT, MY MAGNIFICENT SHE-WOLF, BUT QUICKLY!
I WANT YOU BY MY SIDE AT MY MOMENT OF TRIUMPH --

"-- WHEN PARTICLE X TAKES TO THE SKIES!"
IS IT JUST ME, OR IS THERE NO WAY IN?
CHIN UP, BUCKY --
-- WE'RE RENDEZVOUSING WITH SOMEONE WHO SHOULD KNOW A WAY.
THAT'S RIGHT -- PROVIDING A MILITARY CHAP LIKE YOU WILL LISTEN TO A MERE CITIZEN, CAPTAIN!
SOON TO BE V FOR VICTORY, RIGHT?
VICTORY OR DEATH, THAT'S MY MOTTO -- AND I'M STILL HERE!
GOOD TO MEET YOU. YOU'VE GARNERED QUITE A REPUTATION...
OF COURSE! ESPECIALLY A CITIZEN V!
THAT'S V FOR "VOLUNTEERED FOR THIS MISSION."
THE V BATTALION DESERVES THE CREDIT. PATRIOTS, WORKING UNDERCOVER, FIGHTING THEIR OPPRESSORS FROM WITHIN -- THEY MAKE ME LOOK GOOD.
BUT YOU -- YOU'RE LOOKING A LITTLE BATTLEWORN... DUSTY...?
CARE FOR A REFRESHING DIP?
CAP? HAS HE FLIPPED?
THINK, BUCKY -- WHAT MIGHT LIE BENEATH THE WATERS OF THE MOAT?
YOU MEAN --
"-- A WAY IN?"
"EXACTLY."

"BUT CAP, WHAT IF ZEMO'S MEN ARE WAITING INSIDE?"
"WE'LL SURVIVE. WE ALWAYS DO."
SO -- CAPTAIN AMERICA AND CITIZEN V! AM I TO HAVE THE PLEASURE OF KILLING YOU --
UH-OH...
-- OR, PERHAPS, GIVING YOU A GUIDED TOUR OF CASTLE ZEMO INSTEAD?
CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUCKY -- MEET PAULETTE BRAZEE...
PAULETTE IS...ONE OF MY MOST TRUSTED OPERATIVES WITHIN THE V BATTALION.
ALWAYS PLEASED TO MEET AN ALLY.
I AM HONORED, CAPTAIN.
BUT WE MUST HURRY. THE BARON IS ABOUT TO LAUNCH HIS PARTICLE X!
PAULETTE CAN LEAD YOU, WHILE I --
NO, YOU TWO GO AFTER ZEMO -- YOU'VE EARNED IT. BUCKY AND I WILL PROVIDE THE DISTRACTION.
AND THIS SHOULD HELP YOU TO CREATE ONE, BUCKY!
OH, SO YOU DID NOTICE I WAS HERE TOO...

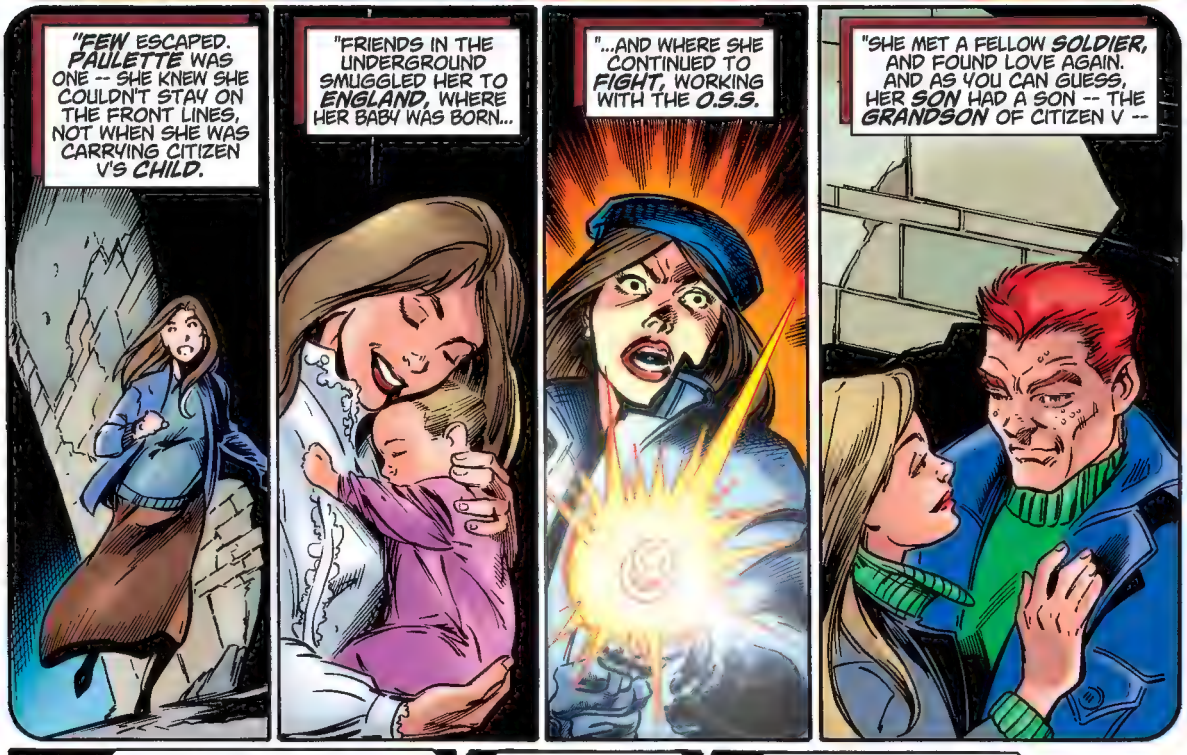
"ABOVE US, AS THE ROCKET CARRYING THE PARTICLE X PAYLOAD BEGAN ITS PRE-FLIGHT CHECK..."
RAT A TAT A BRAMM
EH?! THAT NOISE -- IN THE COURTYARD! WHAT --?! NEIN! NOT THOSE TWO AGAIN!
"HOW DID THEY GAIN ENTRANCE INSIDE THE FORTRESS WALLS?"
BUCKY! CLEAR A PATH TO THE DRAWBRIDGE CONTROLS -- SO WE CAN LET THE ALLIED TROOPS IN!
WHAKK
SWELL IDEA, CAP --
KRAK
BRAKKAKKAK
"-- BUT I'M BETTING I CAN DO IT WITHOUT LEAVING YOU OPEN!"
TZING
CHUK
CHUK
TZANG
KTCH

"IT WAS THE SIGNAL THEY'D BEEN WAITING FOR. WITHOUT ANY HESITATION, THE MEN OF COMPANY C STORMED FORWARD --
"-- WITH ENOUGH FIREPOWER TO OVERWHELM THE CASTLE'S DEFENDERS, NOW THAT THERE WAS A WAY IN.
"AND FOR ALL HIS EARLIER CONFIDENCE --
"-- ZEMO MUST HAVE FELT TIME SLIPPING AWAY..."
IMPOSSIBLE!
BUT THE ROCKET WILL STILL --
-- GO NOWHERE? YOU MUST BE BARON ZEMO -- HARD TO MISTAKE A MAN WITH A PIN-STRIPED BAG OVER HIS HEAD, WHAT?
CITIZEN V?!
THAT'S V FOR VULNERABLE, LIKE YOU ARE NOW. SO DON'T MOVE OR I'LL SHOOT.
PFAH! YOU PRATTLE ON WITH ALL THE OVERCONFIDENCE OF YOUR ARROGANT, SELF-IMPORTANT COUNTRYMEN! BUT I AM A ZEMO --
BLAM
-- AND A ZEMO ACTS!
UNH!
HMP. YOU ARE BETTER THAN MOST, POPINJAY --
-- MY BULLET WAS AIMED AT YOUR HEART. STILL, YOU ASSUMED A MAN OF SCIENCE WOULD BE SOFT --
-- AND YOU WILL DIE FOR YOUR MISTAKE. BUT NOT BEFORE I LAUNCH MY --

-- WHAT?! THAT -- THAT SHIELD!
NO! THE CONTROLS!
WHANNG
FZZT
POP
SPZZT
KRAK
KABOOM
JOHN! ARE YOU --?
LOOKS LIKE THIS LAUNCH IS DELAYED -- PERMANENTLY!
STILL BREATHING, PAULIE.
CAPTAIN AMERICA! AND MY SHE-WOLF -- A TRAITOR! NOW IT ALL BECOMES CLEAR!
THIS IS A MERE SETBACK FOR ME -- BUT THE DARKEST DAY OF YOUR LIVES! FOR I WILL REMEMBER -- I WILL REMEMBER ALL OF YOU!
GET HIM, CAP!
LOVE TO, BUCK -- BUT IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN! THE WAY THOSE FLAMES ARE HEADING FOR THE SPILLED ROCKET FUEL --
-- WE'RE GOING TO BE CUT OFF!
STILL, THERE'LL BE OTHER DAYS -- IF WE ALL GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE --
KRAWHOOOOM

ANY WAGERS, CHUMS? THINK THAT'S THE END OF ZEMO?
THAT COCHON HAD SO MANY SECRET HOLES AND TUNNELS... HE COULD HAVE GOTTEN OUT IN TIME.
WELL, IF HE'S ALIVE. WE'LL KNOW IT SOON -- HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST ANOTHER SHOT AT US.
ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, WE DID STOP THE ROCKET.
I AGREE. WE WON A SMALL VICTORY TODAY, BUT NOT THE WAR!
NAH. GOTTA SAVE SOMETHING FOR TOMORROW!
AND THAT WAS IT -- I NEVER SAW HIM AGAIN. BUT YOU SEEM DISTRACTED, CITIZEN V -- I HOPE MY LITTLE WAR STORY HASN'T PUT YOU TO SLEEP.
OH, NO -- QUITE THE OPPOSITE!
I'VE HEARD SO LITTLE FROM PEOPLE WHO ACTUALLY KNEW THE ORIGINAL CITIZEN V. IT'S...INTRIGUING TO HEAR HOW FULL OF LIFE HE WAS...
...OR VIM AND VIGOR, AS HE MIGHT HAVE DESCRIBED IT.
I JUST HOPE, IN SOME WAY... HE'S PROUD OF WHAT HIS GRANDSON IS DOING...
GRANDSON... THAT'S WHAT BARON ZEMO CLAIMED TO BE, WHEN HE WORE THAT UNIFORM.
JUST BECAUSE ZEMO WASN'T THE ORIGINAL'S GRANDSON DOESN'T MEAN THERE WASN'T ONE!
LET ME TELL YOU A STORY...
"SHORTLY AFTER THE INCIDENT YOU RELATED, ZEMO TURNED V'S TRICK AGAINST HIM --
"-- INFILTRATING THE V BATTALION AND LEADING CITIZEN V INTO A TRAP.
"ZEMO TOOK CITIZEN V'S LIFE WITH HIS OWN HANDS."
AS SHOWN IN THUNDERBOLTS #-1 --Tom

"THE V BATTALION DIDN'T FARE MUCH BETTER. ZEMO KNEW ALL THEIR NAMES AND FACES...
"...IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE FOUND THEM.
BRAKKAKKAK


"FEW ESCAPED. PAULETTE WAS ONE -- SHE KNEW SHE COULDN'T STAY ON THE FRONT LINES, NOT WHEN SHE WAS CARRYING CITIZEN V'S CHILD.
"FRIENDS IN THE UNDERGROUND SMUGGLED HER TO ENGLAND, WHERE HER BABY WAS BORN...
"...AND WHERE SHE CONTINUED TO FIGHT, WORKING WITH THE O.S.S.
"SHE MET A FELLOW SOLDIER, AND FOUND LOVE AGAIN. AND AS YOU CAN GUESS, HER SON HAD A SON -- THE GRANDSON OF CITIZEN V --

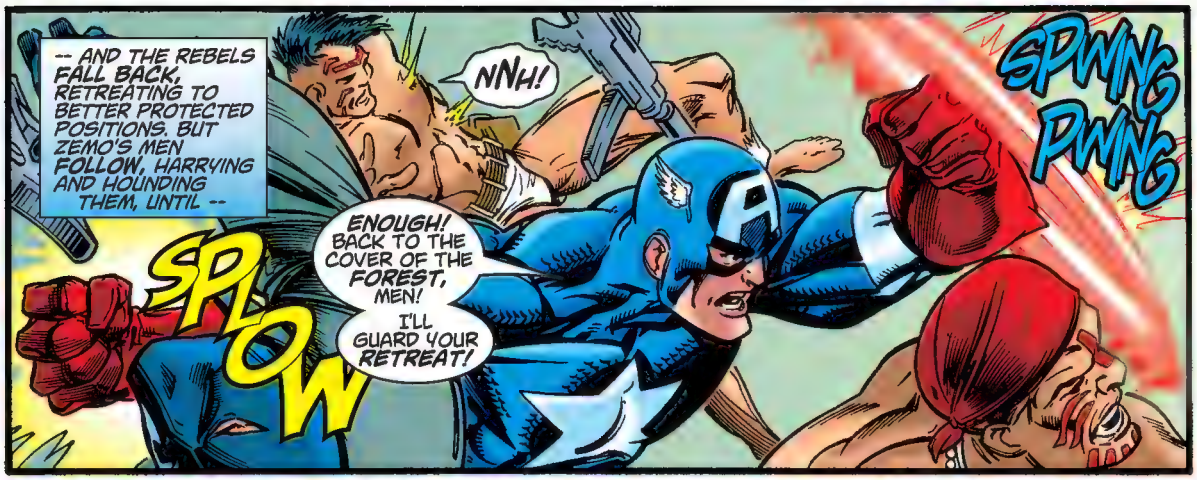
-- WHO HAS DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO REDRESSING THE DISHONOR DONE TO HIS GRANDFATHER'S NAME, BY ZEMO AND ALL WHO STOOD WITH HIM!
DON'T SAY GRANDSON -- SAY GRANDCHILD. THAT WAY YOU'LL BE TELLING THE TRUTH...
...OR AT LEAST, LESS OF A LIE.
I BEG YOUR PARDON?
I'VE FOUGHT MANY PEOPLE IN MY CAREER, MEN AND WOMEN.
YOU'D FIGHT BETTER IF YOU WEREN'T HAVING TO MANIPULATE THAT BULKY PADDING.
THAT -- THAT CHANGES NOTHING! WE HAVE A JOB TO DO -- TO STOP ZEMO, FOR WHAT HE'S DONE IN THE PAST, WHAT HE'LL DO IN THE FUTURE!
JOB? THIS ISN'T A JOB.
THIS IS WAR.

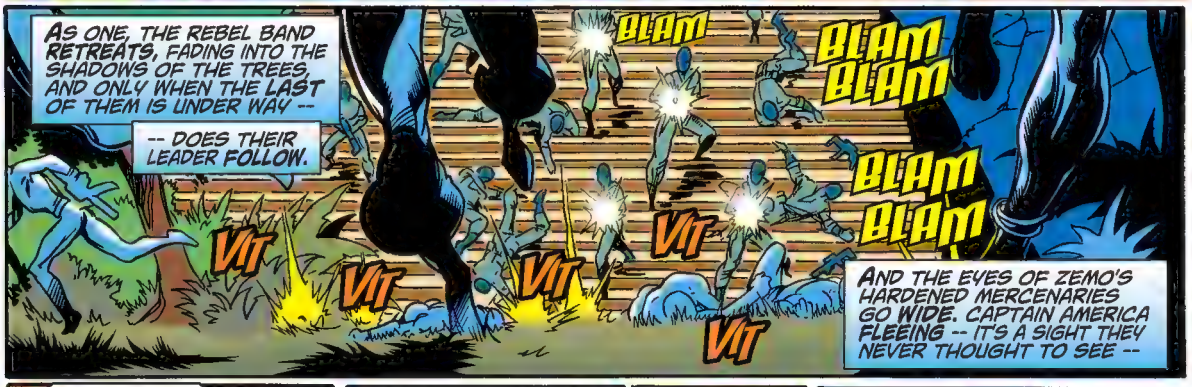
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL. BUT YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF INTO.
ZEMO -- HEINRICH ZEMO -- KILLED THE FIRST CITIZEN V, YES...
...AND HE KILLED BUCKY, TOO -- WHO WAS TOO YOUNG TO BE A SOLDIER, BUT NOT TOO YOUNG TO LOSE HIS LIFE FOR THE CAUSE...
AS SHOWN IN AVENGERS V.1 #4, AND A ZILLION OTHER PLACES -- TOM
YOU HAVE THREE CHOICES, CITIZEN. YOU CAN FIGHT FOR VENGEANCE AND LET IT TWIST YOU INTO SOMETHING AS HARSH AS WHAT YOU FIGHT AGAINST.
YOU CAN WALK AWAY, WHILE YOU STILL CAN. OR YOU CAN RECOGNIZE THAT IT'S A WAR - AND IT'LL NEVER END.
CAN YOU DO THAT? CAN YOU MAKE THAT CHOICE?
I'LL... LET YOU KNOW.
THOUSANDS HAVE DIED -- MILLIONS -- BUT WE CAN'T FIGHT FOR VENGEANCE, CAN'T FIGHT JUST TO EVEN THE SCORE.
WE HAVE TO FIGHT FOR JUSTICE. FOR THE LIVING -- FOR THOSE WHO'LL SUFFER AND DIE NEXT, IF POWER-HUNGRY MADMEN LIKE ZEMO AREN'T STOPPED.
AND ONCE YOU START DOWN THAT PATH, IT NEVER ENDS. TAKE DOWN ONE MADMAN, AND THERE'LL BE ANOTHER --
-- ANOTHER BATTLE TO BE FOUGHT, ANOTHER INJUSTICE TO BE REDRESSED. PICK UP THAT BURDEN, AND IT'LL NEVER LET YOU GO.
48 HOURS LATER...
WE JUST LOST OUR SAFETY MARGIN -- INTELLIGENCE REPORTS THAT ZEMO HAS SUCCEEDED IN IMPROVING PARTICLE X. HE'LL LAUNCH IT SOON.
SO -- WE MOVE OUT NOW?
TONIGHT -- WE NEED THE DARKNESS OF THE NEW MOON FOR COVER.
EVEN AFTER INTENSIFIED TRAINING, WE NEED EVERY CHANCE AT SURPRISE.
SPEAKING OF SURPRISES --

-- YOU THINK ZEMO'S READY FOR THIS ONE?

TEMPLE ZEMO.
TAKE HEED, MY LOYAL SERVANTS -- FOR HERE, IN MY FATHER'S ONETIME STRONGHOLD, HISTORY WILL BE MADE TONIGHT!
THIS MISSILE, ONCE LAUNCHED, WILL EXPLODE IN THE UPPER ATMOSPHERE -- DISRUPTING ALL FORMS OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION!
RADIO, TELEVISION, CELLULAR TELEPHONES, GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEMS -- ALL SATELLITE-BASED COMMUNICATION -- LOST!
AND THE ENSUING STATE OF PANIC WILL REMAIN FOREVER, SINCE I'VE BONDED A GRAVITATIONAL CONSTANT INTO PARTICLE X'S STRUCTURE!
CIVILIZATION WILL COLLAPSE! CHAOS WILL ENSUE! THE NATIONS OF THE WORLD WILL DESTROY EACH OTHER --
-- AND ONCE THEY'VE SPENT THEMSELVES, THE STRONG CAN STEP IN -- AND FINALLY, FINALLY A ZEMO WILL CLAIM THE REINS OF WORLD POWER!
BOY -- PRETTY IMPRESSIVE. TECHNO'S REALLY WORKED WONDERS WITH THAT OLD RELIC FROM WORLD WAR II, H--
-- GHRK!
YOU...ARE... MISTAKEN!
TECHNO IS A...VALUED COLLEAGUE! BUT THE GENIUS HERE -- THE TRIUMPH THAT SHALL COME -- IS THAT OF THE ZEMO DYNASTY!
THE FATHER'S INSPIRATION! THE SON'S ENHANCEMENT! NOTHING M--
TZING
KRAK
TZING TZING
EH? GUNFIRE?

WHO -- WHAT? IT -- IT CAN'T --
CAPTAIN AMERICA!
FORWARD, MEN! JUST AS WE'VE PRACTICED!
FOR FREEDOM!
BRAKK
BRAKKAK
BLAM
BLAM
SO -- HE IS THE SECRET LEADER BEHIND THE NATIVE UPRISING!
WHAT IRONY! MY FIRST FOE -- AND MY FATHER'S GREATEST -- DELIVERED TO ME HERE, AT THE SITE OF WHAT WILL BE MY GREATEST VICTORY!
UHH!
BLAM
BRAKKAK
BLAM
SHOW THEM WHAT WE THINK OF THEIR PETTY REBELLION, MEN! FORWARD --
-- AND DON'T CEASE TO ADVANCE UNTIL THE LAST OF THEM LIES DEAD UNDER YOUR BOOTED FEET!
BLAM
ZEMO'S MEN SURGE FORWARD --


-- AND THE REBELS FALL BACK, RETREATING TO BETTER PROTECTED POSITIONS. BUT ZEMO'S MEN FOLLOW, HARRYING AND HOUNDING THEM, UNTIL --
NNH!
SPWING PWING
SPLOW
ENOUGH! BACK TO THE COVER OF THE FOREST, MEN!
I'LL GUARD YOUR RETREAT!


AS ONE, THE REBEL BAND RETREATS, FADING INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE TREES, AND ONLY WHEN THE LAST OF THEM IS UNDER WAY --
-- DOES THEIR LEADER FOLLOW.
BLAM
BLAM BLAM
BLAM BLAM
VIT
VIT
VIT
VIT
VIT
AND THE EYES OF ZEMO'S HARDENED MERCENARIES GO WIDE. CAPTAIN AMERICA FLEEING -- IT'S A SIGHT THEY NEVER THOUGHT TO SEE --

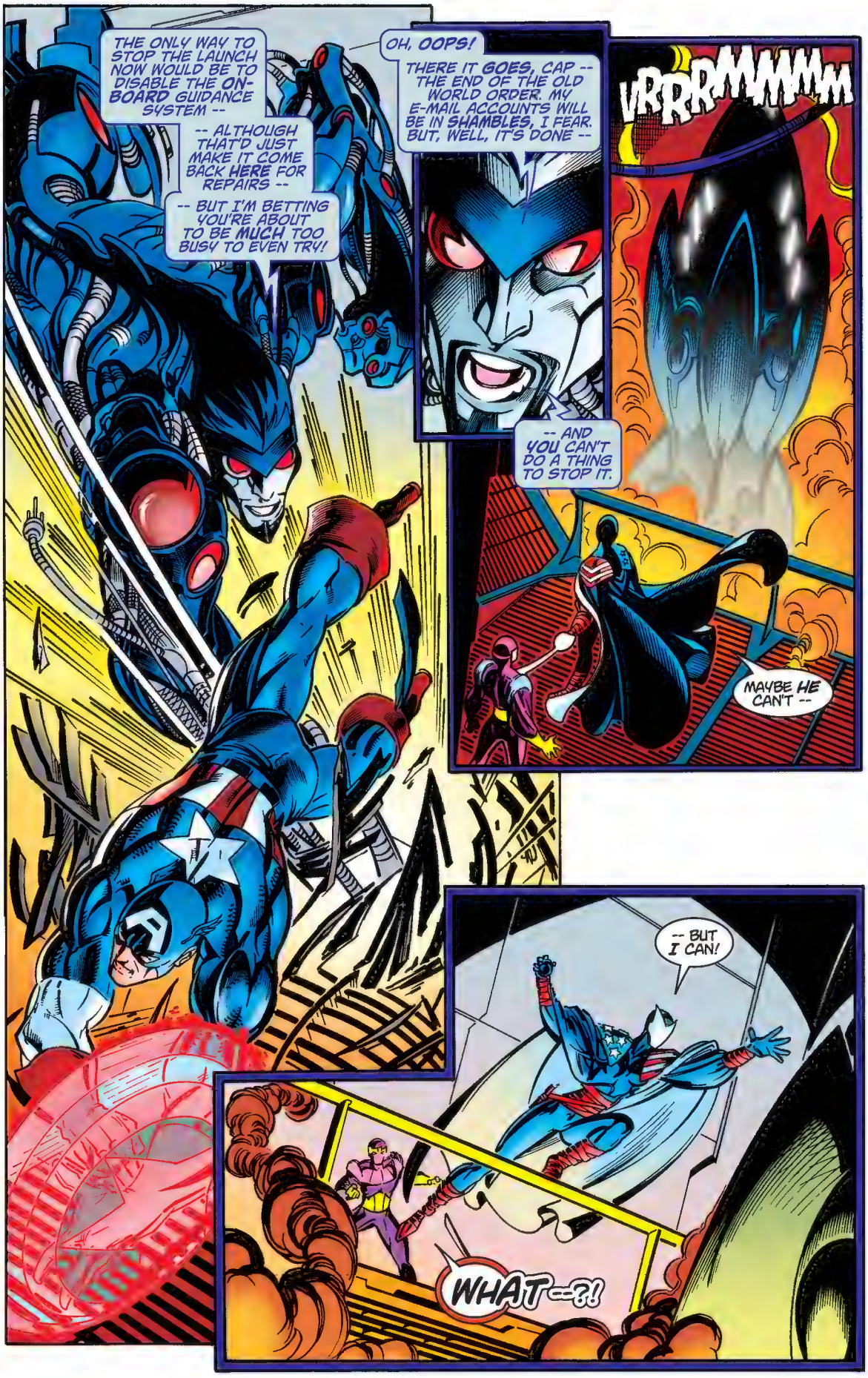
HA! LOOK AT THEM -- RUNNING LIKE WHIPPED DOGS!
FLANK THEM! CUT OFF THEIR RETREAT! I WANT THEM TO KNOW AS THEY DIE --
-- THAT THEIR GREAT HERO FAILED THEM!
THIS IS FOR YOU, FATHER. THE VICTORY YOU COULD NEVER ACHIEVE IN LIFE --
-- GIVEN TO YOU IN HONOR BY THE SON WHO SHALL MAKE REAL WHAT YOU ONLY DREAMED OF.
AND IT IS GLORIOUS! IT'S --
IT'S... TOO EASY.
HE'S RETREATING ON PURPOSE! RETREATING TO DRAW US AWAY FROM --
THE MISSILE!

AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE MISSILE CHAMBER...
YOU RECEIVING? I'M HERE. THE MISSILE'S GUIDANCE BOX IS ACCESSIBLE, SO THE PLAN'S A GO.
I'M PREPPING THE SCRAMBLER UNIT NOW. TELL DAVOS HE DID A GOOD JOB WITH THE ARMORY --
-- WITH THE EQUIPMENT I'VE GOT PACKED UNDER THESE SHOULDER-SHIELDS, I'LL HAVE NO TROUBLE WITH -- WAIT. THERE'S --
KRAK
YOU ALWAYS TALK TO YOURSELF?
TECHNO! BE ON GUARD! THERE MAY BE --
AN INTRUDER?
HAVE NO FEAR, BARON. I WAS PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES ON THAT OTHER MATTER, AND WRAPPED UP IN TIME TO NAB YOUR FORMER ALTER EGO.
AND IT LOOKS LIKE I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE SWITCHING BODIES -- SEE?
CITIZEN V?! BUT -- A WOMAN --?

THIS CANNOT BE THE SAME CITIZEN V WHO DESTROYED MY MEXICAN CASTLE. NO WOMAN COULD --
COULD WHAT, ZEMO? OUT-FENCE YOU? OUTFOX YOU?
YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO GLOAT, WOMAN. YOUR ALLIANCE WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS FAILED --
-- AND THAT, I NOW REALIZE, SUGGESTS A PARTICULARLY SUITABLE COURSE OF ACTION...
ZEMO SAW THROUGH OUR MISDIRECTION PLOY MUCH TOO QUICKLY. CITIZEN V CAN'T HAVE HAD TIME TO DISABLE THE MISSILE.
MUCH AS I HATE TO --
KRAK!
-- I'LL HAVE TO ABANDON THE BATTLE OUT HERE -- HOPE I'VE TAKEN OUT ENOUGH OF THEIR OFFICERS, LEFT THEM DISORGANIZED ENOUGH --
WAK
KRAK
THUD
HOOLP!
-- FOR THE REBELS TO POLISH THEM OFF -- WHILE I GO AFTER ZEMO!
PLOW
ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION ON THE TEMPLE LAY-OUT CITIZEN V'S SPIES SUPPLIED US WITH, THE MISSILES ROOM'S RIGHT THROUGH --
OH, NO!
KLUDD

SADLY, CAPTAIN -- OH, YES.
TECHNO CAUGHT ME... WOOLGATHERING.
I DIDN'T GET THE SCRAMBLER SET, BUT YOU CAN STILL --
A FAMILIAR SCENE, ISN'T IT, CAPTAIN AMERICA?
AS I RECALL, YOUR YOUNG BUCKY MET HIS FATE IN A SIMILAR MANNER!
STOP THE LAUNCH NOW, ZEMO, OR I'LL --
TOO LATE. AS YOU SEE, YOU HAVE ONLY SECONDS IN WHICH TO SAY GOODBYE...
2:01
...AND THE LAUNCH SEQUENCE CANNOT BE STOPPED BY DESTROYING THE CONTROLS --
I HAVE LEARNED FROM MY FATHER'S ERRORS!
SO HAVE I --
SPLANG
-- AND I WON'T LET --
TENG
-- HISTORY --

-- REPEAT ITSELF!
THANK YOU, CAPTAIN. NOW I CAN GIVE YOU A HAND!
TXCHUKK
REALLY, NOW -- IS THIS THUGGERY CALLED FOR? THE REAL CITIZEN V WOULD NEVER HOLD A UNARMED MAN AT SWORD-POINT!
YOU'RE RIGHT -- HE'D PROBABLY JUST HAVE RUN YOU THROUGH. BUT THIS IS A DIFFERENT TIME... A DIFFERENT WAR.
0:35
AND HOW IS THE ABORT GOING, CAPTAIN?
I'M -- I'M TRYING, BUT --
I CAN'T STOP THE COUNTDOWN -- THE CONTROLS ARE FROZEN!
NOT FROZEN, CAP -- FIXED.
TECHNO -- HIDING IN THE CONSOLE?!
NOT HIDING IN IT -- MERGED WITH IT! RECONFIGURING IT -- LOCKING OUT ALL YOUR OVERRIDE COMMANDS!


THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THE LAUNCH NOW WOULD BE TO DISABLE THE ON-BOARD GUIDANCE SYSTEM --
-- ALTHOUGH THAT'D JUST MAKE IT COME BACK HERE FOR REPAIRS --
-- BUT I'M BETTING YOU'RE ABOUT TO BE MUCH TOO BUSY TO EVEN TRY!
OH, OOPS!
THERE IT GOES, CAP -- THE END OF THE OLD WORLD ORDER. MY E-MAIL ACCOUNTS WILL BE IN SHAMBLES, I FEAR. BUT, WELL, IT'S DONE --
-- AND YOU CAN'T DO A THING TO STOP IT.
VRRRMMMMM
MAYBE HE CAN'T --
-- BUT I CAN!
WHAT --?!

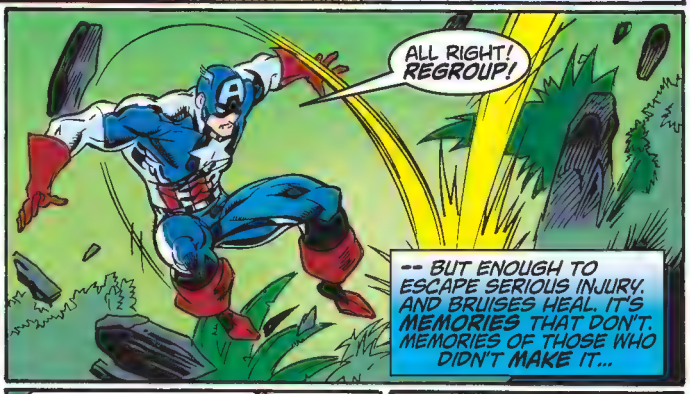
MAG-CLAMP TETHER IN PLACE -- ANCHORED TO MY BELT-HARNESS --
-- AND I'M AIRBORNE.
QUIET, PIERS -- YOU'RE NOT THE ONE RIDING THIS THING. BESIDES, I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M DOING.
I'M STOPPING THE END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT. ISN'T THAT WHAT CITIZEN V WOULD DO?
CITIZEN V!
THAT WAS A BRAVE WOMAN, TECHNO -- DOING WHAT YOU'VE FORCED HER TO! BUT I SWEAR TO YOU --
-- YOU'VE CLAIMED YOUR LAST VICTIM!
UHH!
GET... EAMONN! I'M GOING TO...NEED TO KNOW WHAT TO DO...ONCE I...
...GET INSIDE!

SKREENK
BEEEP
ALL RIGHT, EAMONN. TALK TO ME. I'VE FOUND THE ONBOARD GUIDANCE SYSTEM... BUT I DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME!
IF THIS MISSILE REACHES APOGEE BEFORE I BRING IT UNDER CONTROL...
"AND DON'T EVEN TRY TO TELL ME CONTROL'S NOT AN OPTION.
SMACK
AKT
"IT'S A MACHINE. WE CAN BEAT IT. WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
ALL RIGHT. I'VE GOT IT OPEN. NEXT?
PRY BACK THE COIL HOUSING AND TRACE THE RED WIRE. ON IT.
AND, AH -- IF THEY'RE ALL RED WIRES --?

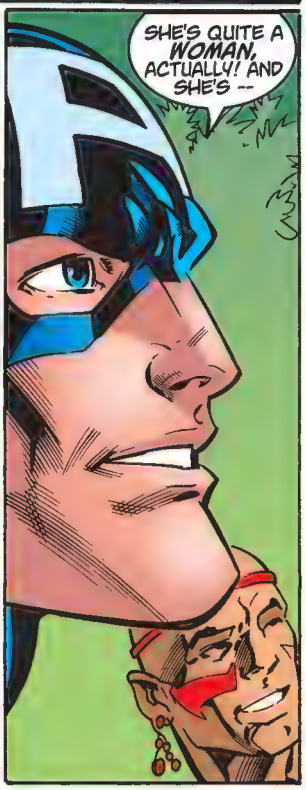
"SAY SOMETHING, EAMONN. IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN FROM HERE -- AND I'M WORKING WITHOUT A NET..."
TSSH
TSSH
TSSH
WELL DONE, CAPTAIN. YOU'VE DEFEATED TECHNO. ENJOY THE MOMENT -- UNTIL PARTICLE X ENSURES MY VICTORY FOREVER-MORE.
YOU'LL TELL US HOW TO REVERSE ITS EFFECTS IN JAIL, ZEMO. OR AREN'T YOU MAN ENOUGH TO FACE ME?
AH-AH. A NICE TRY, THOUGH.
YOU WERE MY FATHER'S BETE NOIRE, CAPTAIN. BUT I HAVE GONE BEYOND THAT. I HAVE THE WORLD --
-- THERE IS NO NEED TO ENSURE YOUR PERSONAL DEFEAT.
AUF WIEDERSEHEN.
ZEMO!
SCH
SCHKK
BUT...
HM? THE MISSILE -- IT'S RETURNING --!
SO SHE HAD THE TIME TO DISABLE IT BEFORE...
VREEEEEN
THANK YOU, CITIZEN V. YOUR SACRIFICE WON'T BE FORGOTTEN -- I'LL SEE TO THAT.

ATTENTION, EVERYONE!
EVACUATE! NOW!
WHEN THAT MISSILE HITS, IT'LL --

AND CAPTAIN AMERICA LEAPS -- NOT FAST ENOUGH, NOT FAR ENOUGH, TO ESCAPE THE BLAST ZONE ENTIRELY --
KRA
KOOM


ALL RIGHT! REGROUP!
-- BUT ENOUGH TO ESCAPE SERIOUS INJURY. AND BRUISES HEAL. IT'S MEMORIES THAT DON'T. MEMORIES OF THOSE WHO DIDN'T MAKE IT...

ALL ACCOUNTED FOR? WHO'S MISSING?
WHERE IS CITIZEN V, CAPTAIN?
SHE'S --
SHE'S --


SHE'S QUITE A WOMAN, ACTUALLY! AND SHE'S --

" -- ON HER WAY!"
REALLY, CAPTAIN. YOU SHOULDN'T LOOK SO SURPRISED. THE V IN MY NAME STANDS FOR VERSATILE, AS WELL --
-- AND MY CAPE ISN'T JUST FOR SHOW. MICROFILAMENT CIRCUITRY WOVEN INTO IT CONVERTS IT TO GLIDER WINGS IN THE SPACE OF A HEARTBEAT.
I'M A WOMAN OF MANY SECRETS, CAPTAIN --
IMPRESSIVE -- I HAD NO IDEA!
-- AND YOU'VE ONLY SEEN THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG!
WELL, I'M GLAD TO HAVE YOU ON OUR SIDE -- SECRETS AND ALL. THAT WAS GOOD WORK YOU DID TODAY.
THANK YOU. QUITE A COMPLIMENT, CONSIDERING THE SOURCE.
AND ONE MORE THING. I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION YOU POSED BEFORE.
HAVING SEEN WHAT ZEMO WAS WILLING TO DO TO THE WORLD -- WHAT HE ALMOST DID,
I STILL INTEND TO CLEAR AWAY THE STAIN ZEMO PUT ON CITIZEN V'S REPUTATION --
H'RAY, CAPTAIN AMERICA!
H'RAY, CITIZEN V!
BUT THAT'S ONLY A START, NOT THE FINAL GOAL.
I'M IN FOR THE DURATION, CAPTAIN. ALL THE WAY.

SO -- YOU THINK ZEMO DIED IN THE EXPLOSION?
NO MORE THAN YOU DO. I THINK ZEMOS ALWAYS LEAVE THEMSELVES A BACK WAY OUT. BUT AT LEAST PARTICLE X IS DESTROYED --
-- ALONG WITH THE SAMPLES THEY'D NEED TO SYNTHESIZE MORE. AND TEMPLE ZEMO -- THAT'S ANOTHER PART OF THE LEGACY, GONE FOR GOOD.
YES, THAT'S IT -- BASK IN YOUR TRIUMPH, AS HEROES ALWAYS DO WHEN THEIR PRECIOUS STATUS QUO HAS SURVIVED.
BASK IN YOUR TRIUMPH, AND THINK ME CRUSHED. FOR YOU HAVE DELIVERED ME A SETBACK. IT'S TRUE --
-- BUT ONLY A SETBACK. THERE ARE ALWAYS MORE MERCENARIES TO BE HIRED, AND ALWAYS MORE PLANS TO BE LAID. AND A ZEMO --
-- A ZEMO NEVER CAPITULATES. NOT WHILE HE STILL LIVES.
AND THAT'S WHY WE LOVE YOU, BARON -- FOR YOUR STICK-TO-IT-IVENESS. BUT ME -- I'D BE BORED SILLY COMMANDING TROOPS.
I NEED A HOT SOLDERING IRON AND A COLD CIRCUIT BOARD. SO UNLESS THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE YOU WANTED...
Ah, TECHNO. IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU SURVIVED.
I WISH YOU GOOD LUCK AND GODSPEED, MY... FRIEND. YOU HAVE DONE ME GREAT SERVICE -- ESPECIALLY THIS LAST PROJECT OF YOURS.
NO SWEAT, BARON -- IT WAS JUST THE KIND OF CHALLENGE I LIKE.
AND I EVEN GOT TO USE A VARIANT OF THE PARTICLE X PRINCIPLE...

HERE YOU ARE, IN A BRAND-NEW STRONGHOLD, PRACTICALLY RIGHT ON TOP OF YOUR DAD'S OLD DIGS --
-- THE LAST PLACE THEY'D LOOK, BECAUSE THEY KNOW IT'S DESTROYED.
BUT EVEN IF THEY DO LOOK, THEY WON'T FIND ANYTHING. AS FAR AS THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS CONCERNED, THIS PLACE JUST ISN'T HERE.
THANKS TO THE SHIELDING SCREENS AROUND IT, IT CAN'T BE SPOTTED -- NOT WITH CAMERA, RADAR, SONAR, INFRA-RED --
-- NOT EVEN WITH THE NAKED EYE. YOU'D HAVE TO KNOW IT'S HERE TO FIND IT AT ALL.
EXCELLENT! WELL DONE, TECHNO! THIS INVISIBILITY MAKES IT THE PERFECT PLACE FROM WHICH TO MAKE MY PLANS, TRAIN MY FORCES...
... AND ONE DAY... RETURN TO CONQUER AN UNSUSPECTING WORLD!
SOUNDS GOOD. AND WHEN THAT DAY COMES, BARON...
... YOU KNOW MY NUMBER!
FOR BEN THOMPSON, CREATOR OF THE ORIGINAL CITIZEN V. BECAUSE TRUE HEROES NEVER DIE..!

WIZARD
#0
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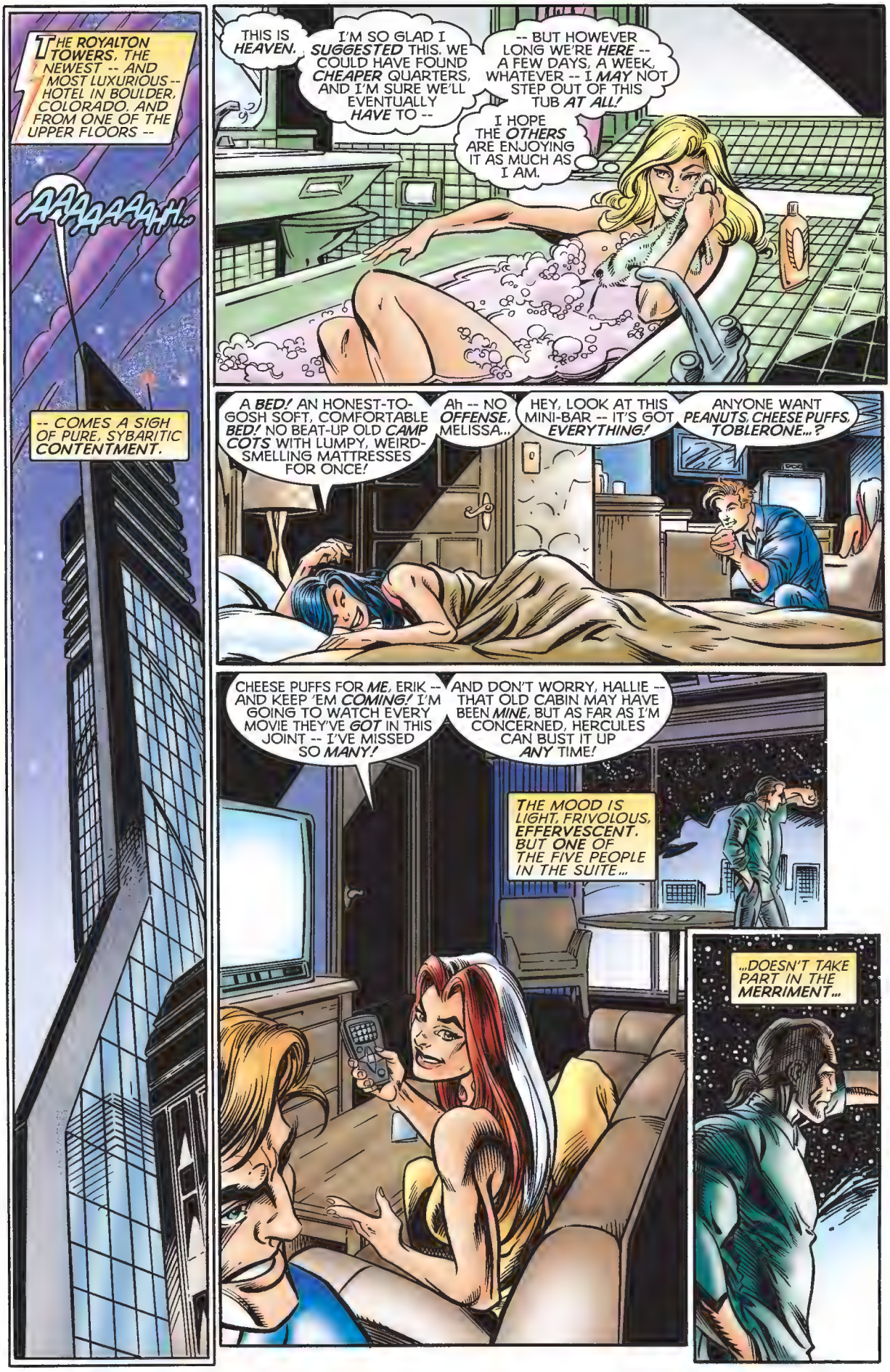
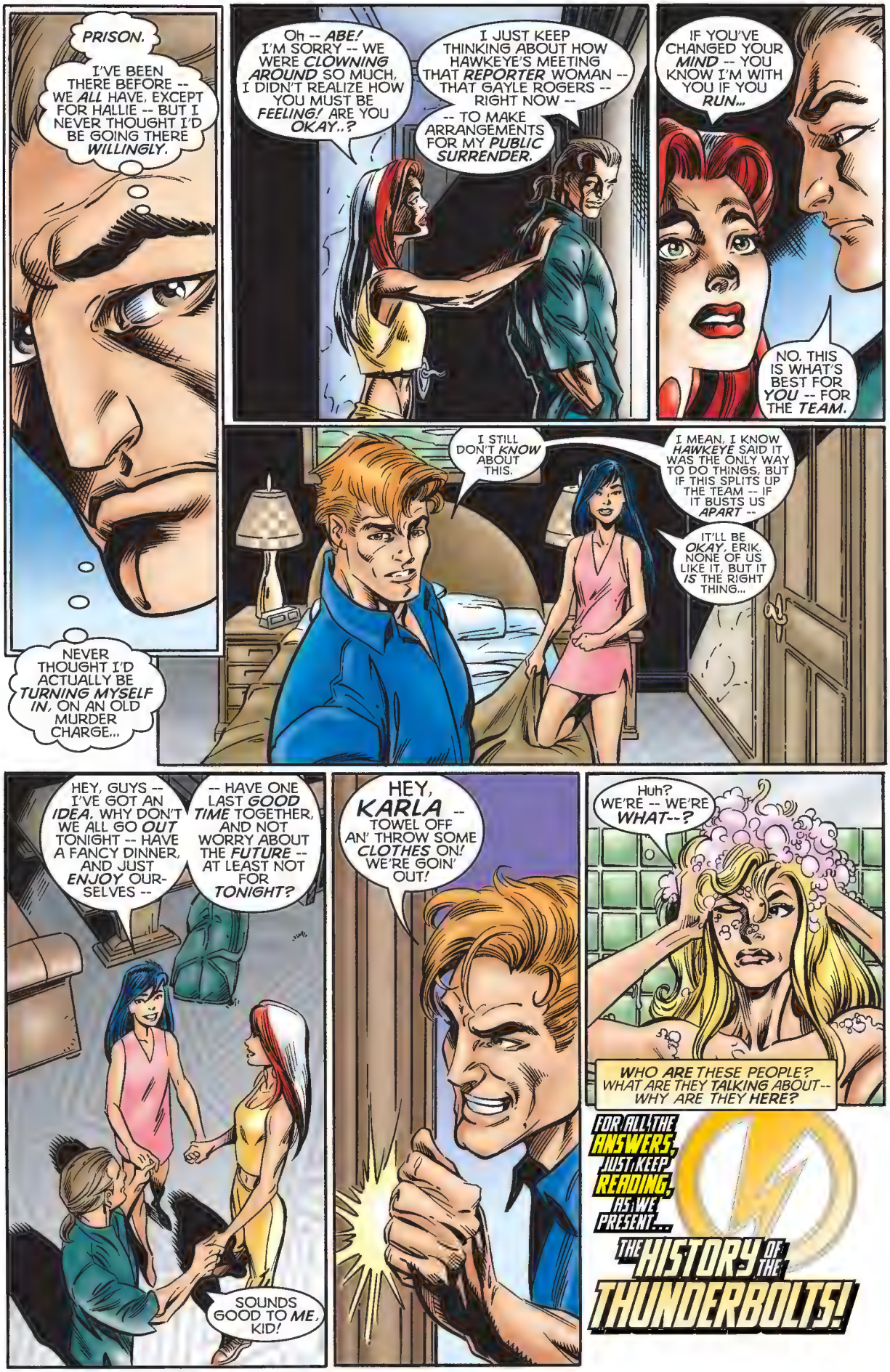
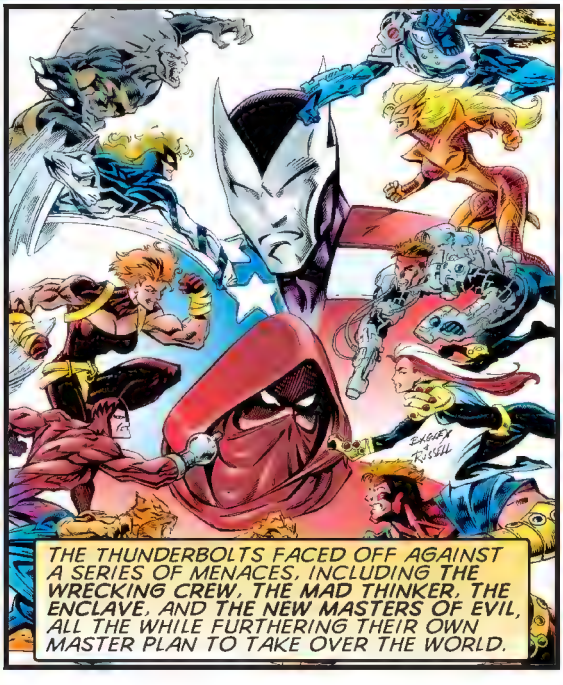
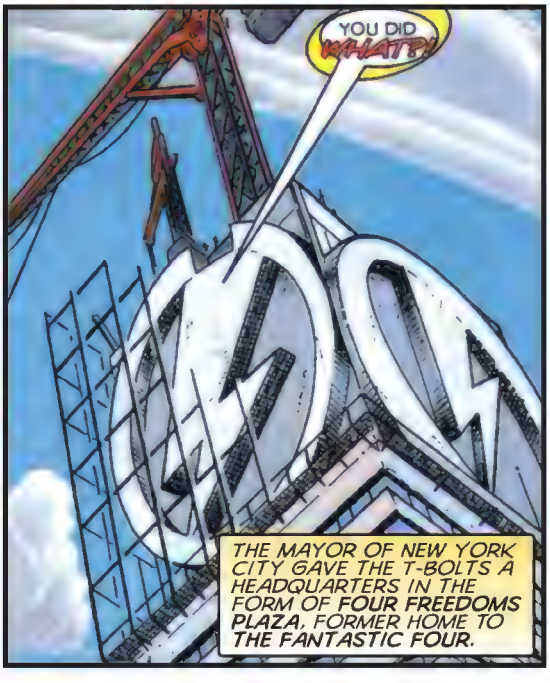

THE ROYALTON TOWERS, THE NEWEST -- AND MOST LUXURIOUS -- HOTEL IN BOULDER, COLORADO. AND FROM ONE OF THE UPPER FLOORS --
AAAAAAAHH...
-- COMES A SIGH OF PURE, SYBARITIC CONTENTMENT.
THIS IS HEAVEN.
I'M SO GLAD I SUGGESTED THIS. WE COULD HAVE FOUND CHEAPER QUARTERS, AND I'M SURE WE'LL EVENTUALLY HAVE TO --
-- BUT HOWEVER LONG WE'RE HERE -- A FEW DAYS, A WEEK, WHATEVER -- I MAY NOT STEP OUT OF THIS TUB AT ALL!
I HOPE THE OTHERS ARE ENJOYING IT AS MUCH AS I AM.
A BED! AN HONEST-TO-GOSH SOFT, COMFORTABLE BED! NO BEAT-UP OLD CAMP COTS WITH LUMPY, WEIRD-SMELLING MATTRESSES FOR ONCE!
Ah -- NO OFFENSE, MELISSA...
HEY, LOOK AT THIS MINI-BAR -- IT'S GOT EVERYTHING!
ANYONE WANT PEANUTS, CHEESE PUFFS, TOBLERONE...?
CHEESE PUFFS FOR ME, ERIK -- AND KEEP 'EM COMING! I'M GOING TO WATCH EVERY MOVIE THEY'VE GOT IN THIS JOINT -- I'VE MISSED SO MANY!
AND DON'T WORRY, HALLIE -- THAT OLD CABIN MAY HAVE BEEN MINE, BUT AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, HERCULES CAN BUST IT UP ANY TIME!
THE MOOD IS LIGHT, FRIVOLOUS, EFFERVESCENT. BUT ONE OF THE FIVE PEOPLE IN THE SUITE...
...DOESN'T TAKE PART IN THE MERRIMENT...


PRISON.
I'VE BEEN THERE BEFORE -- WE ALL HAVE, EXCEPT FOR HALLIE -- BUT I NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE GOING THERE WILLINGLY.
NEVER THOUGHT I'D ACTUALLY BE TURNING MYSELF IN, ON AN OLD MURDER CHARGE...
Oh -- ABE! I'M SORRY -- WE WERE CLOWNING AROUND SO MUCH, I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW YOU MUST BE FEELING! ARE YOU OKAY..?
I JUST KEEP THINKING ABOUT HOW HAWKEYE'S MEETING THAT REPORTER WOMAN -- THAT GAYLE ROGERS -- RIGHT NOW --
-- TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY PUBLIC SURRENDER.
IF YOU'VE CHANGED YOUR MIND -- YOU KNOW I'M WITH YOU IF YOU RUN...
NO. THIS IS WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU -- FOR THE TEAM.
I STILL DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS.
I MEAN, I KNOW HAWKEYE SAID IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO DO THINGS, BUT IF THIS SPLITS UP THE TEAM -- IF IT BUSTS US APART --
IT'LL BE OKAY, ERIK. NONE OF US LIKE IT, BUT IT IS THE RIGHT THING...
HEY, GUYS -- I'VE GOT AN IDEA. WHY DON'T WE ALL GO OUT TONIGHT -- HAVE A FANCY DINNER, AND JUST ENJOY OURSELVES --
-- HAVE ONE LAST GOOD TIME TOGETHER, AND NOT WORRY ABOUT THE FUTURE -- AT LEAST NOT FOR TONIGHT?
SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, KID!
HEY, KARLA -- TOWEL OFF AN' THROW SOME CLOTHES ON! WE'RE GOIN' OUT!
Huh? WE'RE -- WE'RE WHAT--?
WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE? WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT -- WHY ARE THEY HERE?
FOR ALL THE ANSWERS, JUST KEEP READING, AS WE PRESENT...
THE HISTORY OF THE THUNDERBOLTS!

IN THE AFTERMATH OF ONSLAUGHT WHEREIN MANY OF EARTH'S BELOVED HEROES VANISHED, A NEW TEAM OF HEROES BURST UPON THE SCENE: THE THUNDERBOLTS!
-- I DIDN'T COME ALONE!
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO --
THE THUNDERBOLTS!
THE RAT PACK ARE PROFESSIONALS.
THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL OF MORE OPPONENTS ONLY DISORIENTS THEM FOR A MOMENT BEFORE THEY'RE BRINGING THEIR WEAPONS TO BEAR.
THE THUNDERBOLTS QUICKLY GARNERED THE PUBLIC'S APPROVAL. HOWEVER, WHAT THAT SAME PUBLIC DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT THE HEROES THEY ADMIRED WERE ACTUALLY THE MASTERS OF EVIL IN DISGUISE!
CITIZEN V (BARON ZEMO)
A BRILLIANT STRATEGIST, SON OF A NAZI WAR CRIMINAL, AND LEADER OF THE THUNDERBOLTS.
METEORITE (MOONSTONE)
SELF-INTERESTED ONE-TIME PSYCHIATRIST POSSESSED OF SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, SPEED, AND THE POWER OF FLIGHT.
TECHNO (THE FIXER)
INTUITIVE TECHNOLOGICAL GENIUS ARMED WITH AN EVER-CHANGING TECH-PAC OF WONDROUS SUPER-SCIENTIFIC DEVICES.
SONGBIRD (SCREAMING MIMI)
WITHDRAWN YOUNG WOMAN WHOSE VOICE CAN CREATE OBJECTS OF SOLIDIFIED SOUND.
MACH-1 (THE BEETLE)
AVIATOR WHOSE BATTLE ARMOR GIVES HIM THE FLIGHT, SPEED AND FIREPOWER OF A HUMAN FIGHTER PLANE.
ATLAS (GOLIATH)
FORMER MERCENARY WITH THE POWER TO GROW TO COLOSSAL SIZE.


THE THUNDERBOLTS FACED OFF AGAINST A SERIES OF MENACES, INCLUDING THE WRECKING CREW, THE MAD THINKER, THE ENCLAVE, AND THE NEW MASTERS OF EVIL, ALL THE WHILE FURTHERING THEIR OWN MASTER PLAN TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.


YOU DID WHAT?!
THE MAYOR OF NEW YORK CITY GAVE THE T-BOLTS A HEADQUARTERS IN THE FORM OF FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA, FORMER HOME TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

THE ACCLAIM AND RECOGNITION OF BEING HEROES BEGAN TO AFFECT CERTAIN OF THE THUNDERBOLTS, WHO CONTEMPLATED GIVING UP THEIR LIVES OF CRIME AND MAINTAINING THEIR CHARADE AS HEROES.
ESPECIALLY AFFECTED WERE MACH-1 AND SONGBIRD, WHO DEVELOPED A RELATIONSHIP, AND ATLAS, WHO SHARED A MUTUAL ATTRACTION WITH THE T-BOLTS' MAYORAL LIAISON, DALLAS RIORDAN.
THE THUNDERBOLTS DEFEATED THE MAD GENETICIST ARNIM ZOLA WITH THE HELP OF A YOUNG, IDEALISTIC HERO CALLED JOLT. JOLT WAS SUBSEQUENTLY INDUCTED INTO THE GROUP--LITTLE REALIZING THE DARK SECRET HER TEAMMATES WERE CONCEALING FROM HER.
-- I ACCEPT. I'M FLATTERED, AND I'M GRATEFUL FOR THE OFFER --
-- AND IF I CAN USE MY POWERS TO MAKE SURE OTHERS DON'T HAVE TO GO THROUGH WHAT HAPPENED HERE TODAY --
-- WELL, I'LL DO MY BEST. AND AS FOR A NAME -- -- I GUESS YOU CAN CALL ME JOLT!
THE NEWSMEN APPLAUD, AND CHEER -- AND JUST LIKE THAT, A NEW DYNAMIC ENTERS THE THUNDERBOLTS.
DURING A BATTLE WITH THE ELEMENTS OF DOOM, TECHNO WAS BRUTALLY CUT DOWN. BUT HIS CONSCIOUSNESS, DOWNLOADED INTO HIS TECH-PAC, SURVIVED, AND HE RE-EMERGED IN A ROBOTIC BODY OF HIS OWN DESIGN.
THEN, SHOCKINGLY, THE MISSING HEROES RETURNED: THE AVENGERS, THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND MORE. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, THE THUNDERBOLTS WERE UNMASKED AS THE MASTERS OF EVIL--NOT BY S.H.I.E.L.D. OR ANOTHER HERO, BUT BY BARON ZEMO, WHO USED THE REVELATION OF THE T-BOLTS' TRUE IDENTITIES TO REASSERT HIS CONTROL OVER THE TEAM!
THE MASTERS OF EVIL?
ZAK
ZAK
TECHNO! AS WE DISCUSSED --
--NOW!

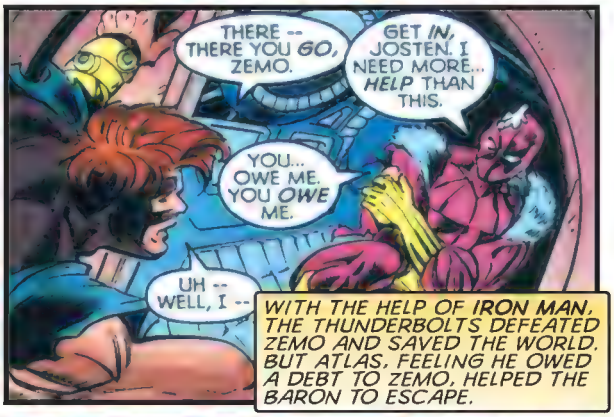
KA
KA
KA
AMID THE CHAOS THAT FOLLOWED, THE T-BOLTS MADE THEIR ESCAPE, LEAVING DESTRUCTION IN THEIR WAKE BY BLOWING UP FOUR FREEDOMS PLAZA!

THE THUNDERBOLTS' PLAN QUICKLY MOVED INTO ITS FINAL PHASE AS ZEMO USED A BIO-MODEM DEVELOPED BY THE ENCLAVE TO MENTALLY ENSLAVE THE WORLD'S POPULACE.
"-- AND THE REST FELL LIKE DOMINOES. JUST LIKE DOMINOES."
HAPPY TO BE OF SERVICE, BARON.
BUT SAY -- WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEAK TO YOUR SUBJECTS? I'VE BEEN MONITORING THEIR COMMUNICATIONS, BUT I COULD BREAK IN...
-- YES, FIVER. I THINK I'D LIKE THAT. SEE TO IT, IF YOU WOULD.

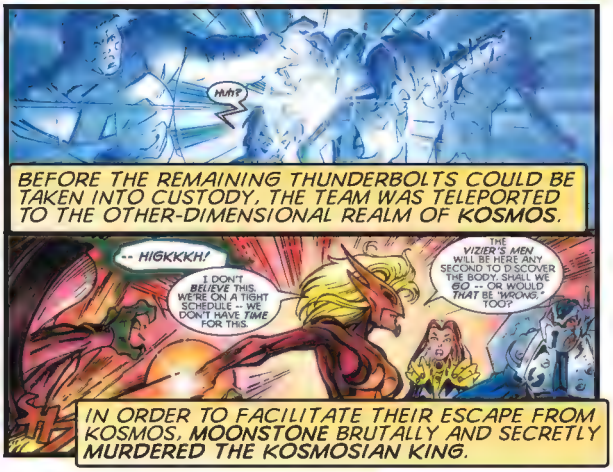
BUT SOME OF THE THUNDERBOLTS TURNED ON ZEMO, FIGHTING NOT ONLY TO END HIS TYRANNY, BUT TO REDEEM THEMSELVES AS WELL.
IRON MAN WAS RIGHT! THE MASTERS ARE ATTACKING!
BUT -- I SEEM TO REMEMBER -- THOUGHT
KRAAM
YOU THINK TOO MUCH, RICHARDS. THAT MAY HELP YOU OUT A LOT AS LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, BUT RIGHT HERE AND RIGHT NOW --
ALL IT'S GONNA DO IS GET YOU KILLED. START NO WITH CHROME-DOME HERE!
KLAK
BRAKKA
OD'S BLOOD! THEY'RE BITTEN WITH THE PERSON OF THE OLD DARK LEGIONS!

THE RENEGADE T-BOLTS WERE FORCED TO CONTEND WITH THE COMBINED MIGHT OF THE AVENGERS AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR, WHO WERE UNDER ZEMO'S CONTROL.

I'LL TELL YOU, BARON. I DID HAVE SOMETHING ELSE TO DO --
SKOW
-- BUT I THINK I'LL ENJOY MYSELF HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE. AFTER ALL, JOLT'S FAST, AND SHE'S RESOURCEFUL -- I'M SURE SHE CAN HANDLE IT.

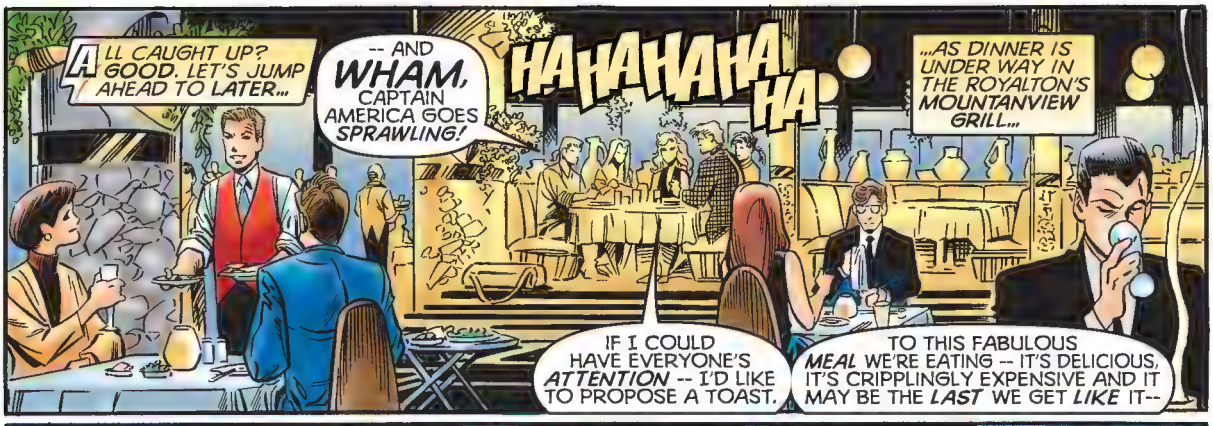


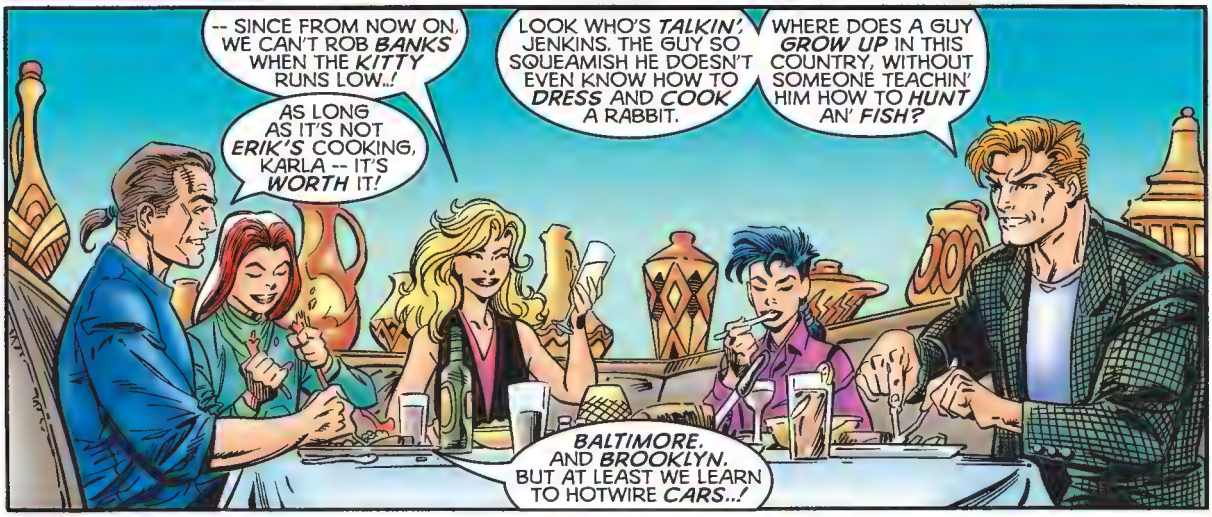
WITH THE HELP OF IRON MAN, THE THUNDERBOLTS DEFEATED ZEMO AND SAVED THE WORLD. BUT ATLAS, FEELING HE OWED A DEBT TO ZEMO, HELPED THE BARON TO ESCAPE.


HUH?
BEFORE THE REMAINING THUNDERBOLTS COULD BE TAKEN INTO CUSTODY, THE TEAM WAS TELEPORTED TO THE OTHER-DIMENSIONAL REALM OF KOSMOS.
-- HIGKKKH!
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. WE'RE ON A TIGHT SCHEDULE -- WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS.
THE VIZIER'S MEN WILL BE HERE ANY SECOND TO DISCOVER THE BODY. SHALL WE GO -- OR WOULD THAT BE "WRONG," TOO?
IN ORDER TO FACILITATE THEIR ESCAPE FROM KOSMOS, MOONSTONE BRUTALLY AND SECRETLY MURDERED THE KOSMOSIAN KING.

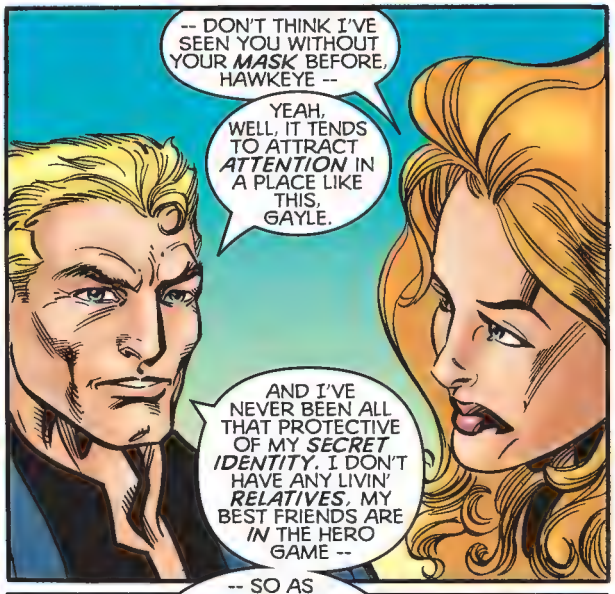
BACK ON EARTH, THE T-BOLTS FOUND THEMSELVES ON THE RUN FROM THE LAW, OTHER SUPER HEROES, AND...
...BARON ZEMO HIMSELF, WHO, ALONG WITH TECHNO, CRAVES VENGEANCE ON THOSE WHO BETRAYED HIM.
THE FUGITIVES, WHO TOOK PART IN A RECENT ATTEMPT TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD BY FORCE, ELUDED PURSUIT, AND --
THEY'VE STAYED TOGETHER, AND THE YOUNG IDEALIST IS WITH THEM.
THEY MUST BE ATTEMPTING TO REGAIN RESPECTABILITY. THERE IS NO OTHER ANSWER. NOT WITH HER THERE.
A FOOLHARDY STRATEGY -- AND ALMOST AMUSING ENOUGH TO MERIT JUST WATCHING AS IT FAILS. BUT NO -- TECHNO, HOW ARE YOUR ROBOTICS SKILLS?
ZEMO WAS CONFRONTED BY A MYSTERIOUS FIGURE CLAD IN THE COSTUME ZEMO HAD WORN AS CITIZEN V.
AS DO YOU, DOPPELGÄNGER.
I MUST COMPLIMENT YOU. YOU ARE SKILLED WITH THE SWORD. BUT YOU ARE LIKE A NEWCOMER, DEPENDING ON TALENT OVER EXPERIENCE --
AND IN THE END, IT IS EXPERIENCE THAT WILL TRIUMPH!
KLENG
THIS NEW CITIZEN V CLAIMS TO BE THE GRANDSON OF THE ORIGINAL, GOLDEN AGE CITIZEN V, AND DESIRES RETRIBUTION ON THOSE WHO TARNISHED HIS GRANDFATHER'S REPUTATION.
OF COURSE NOT, MR. JENKINS.
YOU ARE FREE TO GO WHENEVER YOU WISH. I SIMPLY WANTED TO DISPEL ANY ILLUSIONS ABOUT WHO HAS THE UPPER HAND HERE.
CRIMSON COWL, YOU SET THIS WHOLE THING UP -- SENDING CYCLONE TO REEL US IN, AND THEN AMBUSHING US. WHAT'S YOUR GAME?
NO GAME, MR. SOREN. I'M A BUSINESSWOMAN -- AND I'D LIKE TO MAKE YOU AN OFFER.
WHAT KIND OF OFFER?
MEANWHILE, THE T-BOLTS WERE GIVEN AN ULTIMATUM: JOIN THE CRIMSON COWL'S NEW MASTERS OF EVIL OR BE DESTROYED.
HAVING BEEN PUSHED TOO FAR, THE TEAM PUSHED BACK, GOING TOE-TO-TOE WITH THE MASTERS OF EVIL. IN THE MIDST OF THE FIGHT, THE TEAM WAS AIDED BY THE SUPER-VILLAIN KNOWN AS THE DREADKNIGHT...
...WHO TURNED OUT TO BE HAWKEYE THE MARKSMAN IN DISGUISE. HAWKEYE OFFERED TO LEAD THE THUNDERBOLTS AND HELP CLEAR THEIR NAMES.
BUT THERE WAS ONE CONDITION: MACH-1 MUST TURN HIMSELF IN TO THE AUTHORITIES AND SERVE TIME FOR THE MURDERS HE COMMITTED WHEN HE WAS THE BEETLE!

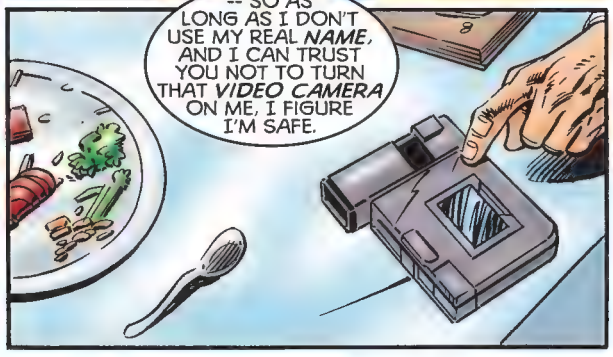
DESIGN & LETTERING BY COMICRAFT'S JOHN MARASIGAN


ALL CAUGHT UP? GOOD. LET'S JUMP AHEAD TO LATER...
-- AND WHAM, CAPTAIN AMERICA GOES SPRAWLING!
HAHAHAHAHA
...AS DINNER IS UNDER WAY IN THE ROYALTON'S MOUNTANVIEW GRILL...
IF I COULD HAVE EVERYONE'S ATTENTION -- I'D LIKE TO PROPOSE A TOAST.
TO THIS FABULOUS MEAL WE'RE EATING -- IT'S DELICIOUS, IT'S CRIPPLINGLY EXPENSIVE AND IT MAY BE THE LAST WE GET LIKE IT--

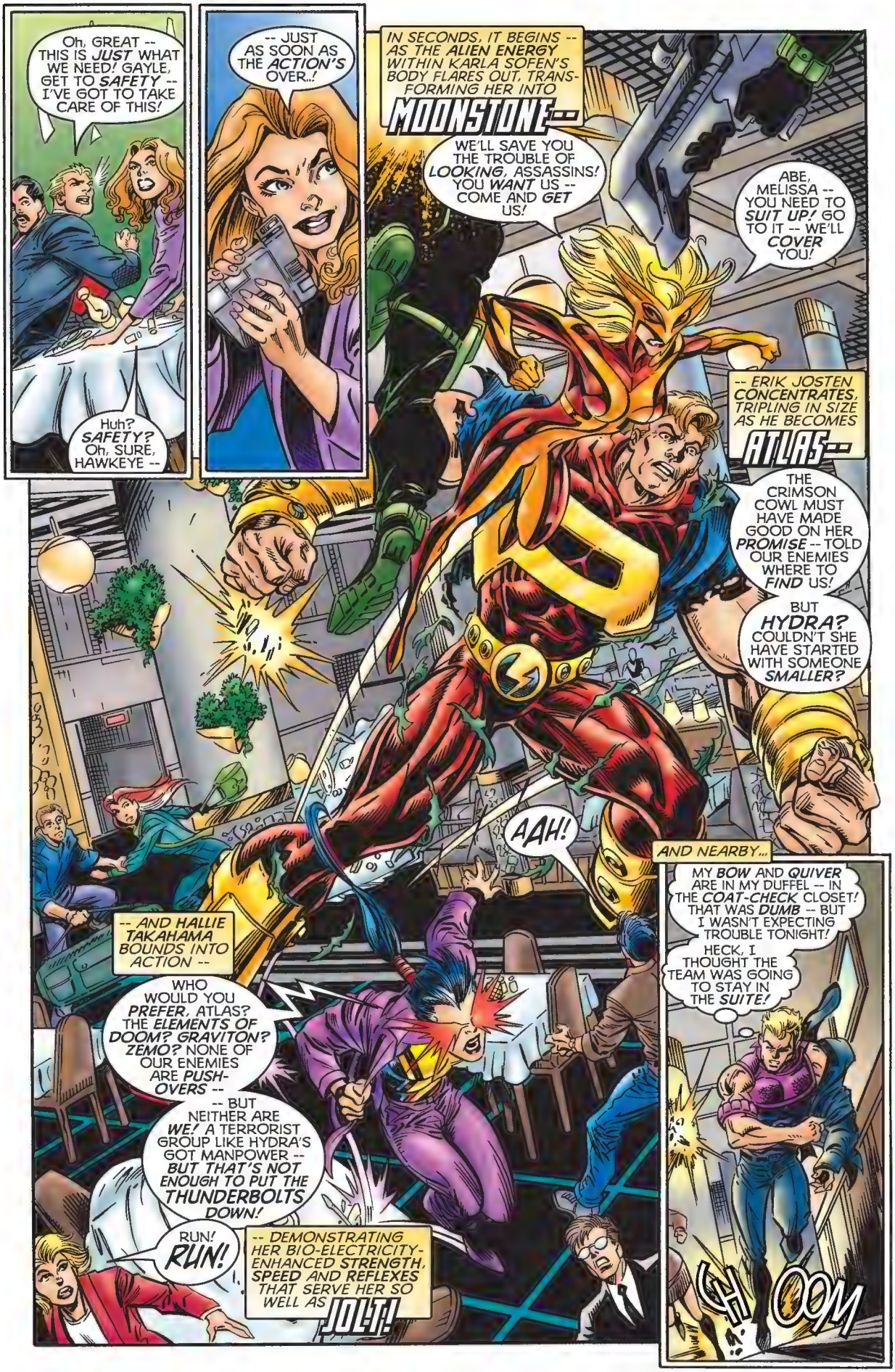

-- SINCE FROM NOW ON, WE CAN'T ROB BANKS WHEN THE KITTY RUNS LOW..!
AS LONG AS IT'S NOT ERIK'S COOKING, KARLA -- IT'S WORTH IT!
LOOK WHO'S TALKIN', JENKINS. THE GUY SO SQUEAMISH HE DOESN'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO DRESS AND COOK A RABBIT.
WHERE DOES A GUY GROW UP IN THIS COUNTRY, WITHOUT SOMEONE TEACHIN' HIM HOW TO HUNT AN' FISH?
BALTIMORE. AND BROOKLYN. BUT AT LEAST WE LEARN TO HOTWIRE CARS..!

THIS IS ACTUALLY... FUN. BUT I'M GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION, AND SOON. I JOINED THE T-BOLTS WITH THE INTENTION OF TAKING OVER --
-- OF USING THE TEAM TO FEATHER MY OWN NEST. BUT NOW WE'VE GOT A NEW LEADER, AND I'VE GOT TO FIGURE OUT IF THAT'LL BE A PROBLEM.
"SOMETIMES, BEING SECOND-IN-COMMAND IS THE BEST WAY TO AFFECT THINGS -- BUT I'M NOT SURE IF THAT'S TRUE WITH HAWKEYE..."
AND, AS KARLA SOFEN THINKS ABOUT THE AVENGING ARCHER...


-- DON'T THINK I'VE SEEN YOU WITHOUT YOUR MASK BEFORE, HAWKEYE --
YEAH, WELL, IT TENDS TO ATTRACT ATTENTION IN A PLACE LIKE THIS, GAYLE.
AND I'VE NEVER BEEN ALL THAT PROTECTIVE OF MY SECRET IDENTITY. I DON'T HAVE ANY LIVIN' RELATIVES, MY BEST FRIENDS ARE IN THE HERO GAME --

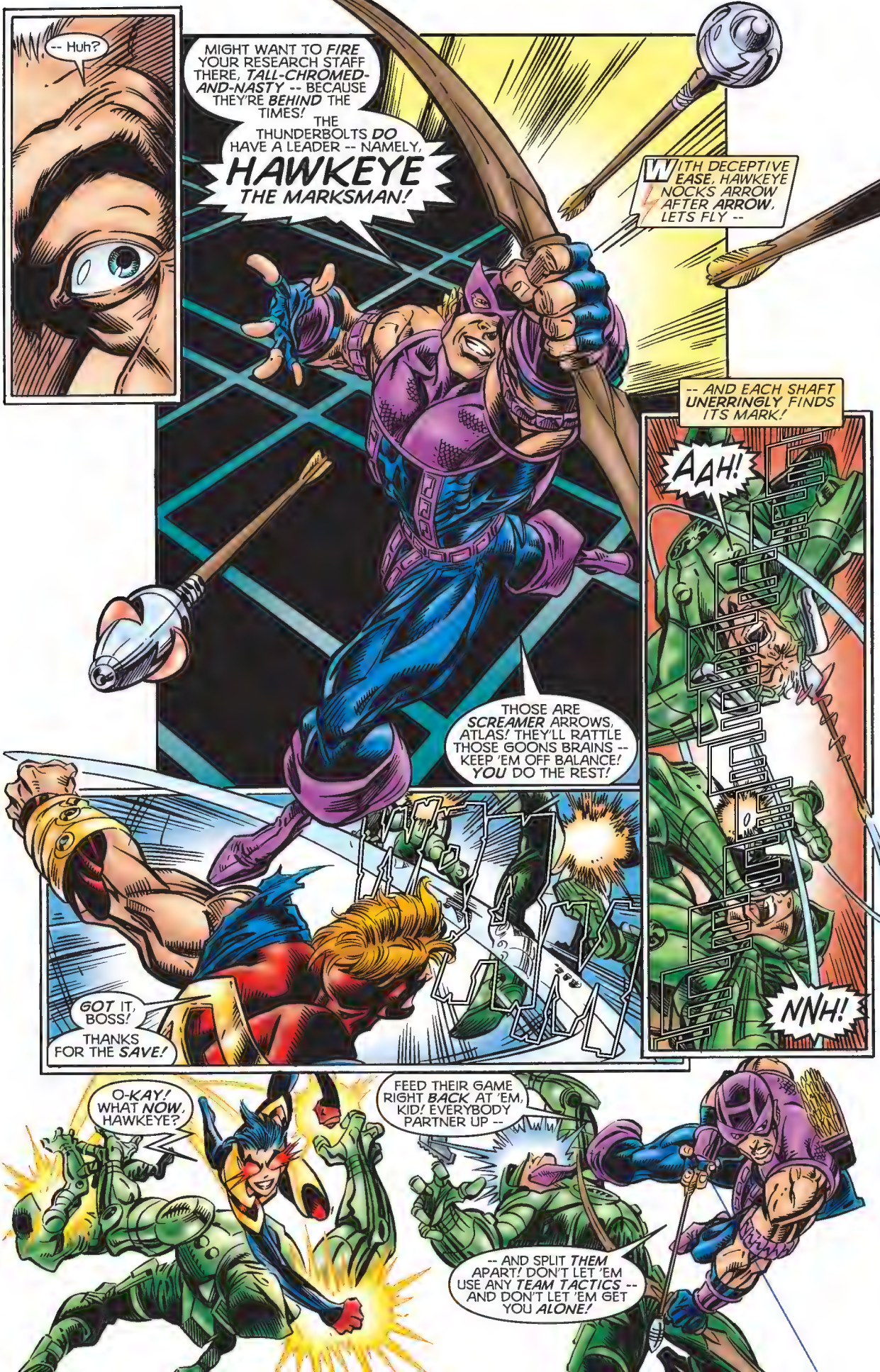

-- SO AS LONG AS I DON'T USE MY REAL NAME, AND I CAN TRUST YOU NOT TO TURN THAT VIDEO CAMERA ON ME, I FIGURE I'M SAFE.

THAT'S AN INTERESTING CHOICE OF WORDS, SAFE. I'M SETTING THINGS UP WITH THE LOCAL POLICE AND THE F.B.I. --
-- WITH MY NETWORK COVERING THE SURRENDER SO NOTHING GOES WRONG, AND THE WORLD KNOWS MACH-1 IS COMING IN WILLINGLY --
-- BUT I WANT TO ASK YOU -- WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? GOING TO SUCH LENGTHS FOR A GROUP OF SUPER-VILLAINS?
EX-VILLAINS. I STARTED OUT AS A CROOK MYSELF, DUE TO CHANCE AND A FEW BONEHEAD MISTAKES. AND IF NOT FOR THE AVENGERS --
-- WELL, I'D NEVER HAVE HAD A SHOT AT REDEEMIN' MYSELF, GETTIN' OUT OF THAT LIFE. I'M GRATEFUL FOR THAT, AN' FIGURE I SHOULD PASS THE HELP ON.
BUT ARE THE THUNDERBOLTS IN THE SAME POSITION YOU WERE? THEY'VE BEEN ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE LAW FOR YEARS, MOST OF THEM...
CLINT BARTON IS SILENT FOR A MOMENT --
-- AS HE TRIES TO FORMULATE AN ANSWER HE'S NOT SURE OF IN HIS OWN MIND. BUT BEFORE HE CAN SPEAK --
SKRAK
ALL RIGHT, ASSASSIN-SQUAD -- MOVE! SECURE THE RESTAURANT -- AND ISOLATE TARGETS! OUR INTEL SAYS THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE IN HERE --
-- AND HYDRA HAS ORDERED THEIR DEATHS!
REMEMBER -- YOUR POWER-VESTS MAKE YOU A MATCH FOR ANY OF 'EM, SO FIND 'EM -- AND SANCTION 'EM -- BEFORE THEY SLIP AWAY!
WE'RE ON IT, SECTION CHIEF! A BLONDE BOMBSHELL, AN ASIAN KID, A BIG FARMBOY, A SKINNY CHICK AND ANOTHER GUY --
-- THEY CAN'T EXACTLY HIDE IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!


Oh, GREAT -- THIS IS JUST WHAT WE NEED! GAYLE, GET TO SAFETY -- I'VE GOT TO TAKE CARE OF THIS!
Huh? SAFETY? Oh, SURE, HAWKEYE --
-- JUST AS SOON AS THE ACTION'S OVER...!
IN SECONDS, IT BEGINS -- AS THE ALIEN ENERGY WITHIN KARLA SOFEN'S BODY FLARES OUT, TRANSFORMING HER INTO MOONSTONE--
WE'LL SAVE YOU THE TROUBLE OF LOOKING, ASSASSINS! YOU WANT US -- COME AND GET US!
ABE, MELISSA -- YOU NEED TO SUIT UP! GO TO IT -- WE'LL COVER YOU!
-- ERIK JOSTEN CONCENTRATES, TRIPLING IN SIZE AS HE BECOMES ATLAS--
THE CRIMSON COWL MUST HAVE MADE GOOD ON HER PROMISE -- TOLD OUR ENEMIES WHERE TO FIND US!
BUT HYDRA? COULDN'T SHE HAVE STARTED WITH SOMEONE SMALLER?
AAH!
AND NEARBY...
MY BOW AND QUIVER ARE IN MY DUFFEL -- IN THE COAT-CHECK CLOSET! THAT WAS DUMB -- BUT I WASN'T EXPECTING TROUBLE TONIGHT!
HECK, I THOUGHT THE TEAM WAS GOING TO STAY IN THE SUITE!
KH OOM
-- AND HALLIE TAKAHAMA BOUNDS INTO ACTION --
WHO WOULD YOU PREFER, ATLAS? THE ELEMENTS OF DOOM? GRAVITON? ZEMO? NONE OF OUR ENEMIES ARE PUSH-OVERS --
-- BUT NEITHER ARE WE! A TERRORIST GROUP LIKE HYDRA'S GOT MANPOWER -- BUT THAT'S NOT ENOUGH TO PUT THE THUNDERBOLTS DOWN!
RUN! RUN!
-- DEMONSTRATING HER BIO-ELECTRICITY-ENHANCED STRENGTH, SPEED AND REFLEXES THAT SERVE HER SO WELL AS JOLT!

KRAMM
YOU LIKE THESE FIST-RAMS, ATLAS? THEY WERE DESIGNED BY A MAN NAMED JACKHAMMER -- AND IMPROVED BY HYDRA'S TECH-DIVISION!
THEY'RE MORE THAN ENOUGH TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!
THEIR LEADER -- THAT SCAR! HE MUST BE THE ONE TECHNO USED TO TALK ABOUT, FROM THE DAYS HE WAS A HYDRA SECTION LEADER!
HE'S HORST EISELE -- USED TO BE AN ASSASSIN UNDER EL JAGUAR, BUT WORKED HIS WAY UP! TECHNO SAID HE'S GOOD -- VERY GOOD!
RA-TT
Uh-oh! I TALKED BIG BEFORE --
-- BUT EVEN WITH MY AGILITY, IT'S ALL I CAN DO TO STAY AHEAD OF THESE GUYS!
THEY CAN'T HIT ME --
-- BUT THEY'RE HERDING ME, BOXING ME IN! PRETTY SOON, I WON'T HAVE ANYWHERE TO GO, IF I DON'T GET SOME HE--
SONGBIRD! MACH-1! BOY, ARE YOU GUYS A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES!
Huh?
DON'T WORRY, JOLT -- -- WE'LL GET THESE BOGEYS OFF YOUR TAIL!
BRAKKABRAH
BRAKKAAK
MACH-1 SOARS TO THE ATTACK, HIS CYBERNETICALLY-CONTROLLED EXO-SKELETON FIRING A STEADY BARRAGE OF TRANQUILIZER BULLETS--
-- AND AS FOR SONGBIRD --THE SLIM BEAUTY SCREAMS, AND THE SOUND LANCES OUT, MODIFIED BY THE HIGH-TECH CARAPACE SHE WEARS --

-- TRANSFORMED FROM MERE SOUND INTO SOLID, UNYIELDING MATTER!
WHAM
KRAM
WHOA! THANKS, SONGBIRD!
BUT THOUGH THE THUNDERBOLTS ENJOY A MOMENTARY RESPITE --
SLAMM
BLAST IT, HOW MANY OF THESE AGENTS ARE THERE?
GET --
-- OFF!
-- IT DOESN'T LAST.
HOLY --! THOSE CANNONS --
-- POWERFUL ENOUGH TO CRACK MY SOUND-SHIELD!
THAT'S IT -- KEEP THEM APART! KEEP THEM FROM BACKING EACH OTHER UP!
SEPARATE 'EM, AND OVERWHELM 'EM, ONE BY ONE! LONG AS THEY CAN'T WORK TOGETHER --
ZAM
KRAM
WHAM
UHH!
"-- THEY DON'T STAND A CHANCE!"
Oh, MAN -- THEY'RE EVERYWHERE! IF ONLY I COULD GET A SECOND TO CATCH MY BREATH -- TO THINK! BUT AS IT IS --
HA! IT'S JUST LIKE OUR RESEARCH TOLD US! WITHOUT ZEMO TO LEAD THEM, THEY'VE GOT NO REAL ORGANIZATION!
IT'S LIKE SHOOTING FISH IN A--


-- Huh?
MIGHT WANT TO FIRE YOUR RESEARCH STAFF THERE, TALL-CHROMED-AND-NASTY -- BECAUSE THEY'RE BEHIND THE TIMES!
THE THUNDERBOLTS DO HAVE A LEADER -- NAMELY,
HAWKEYE
THE MARKSMAN!
WITH DECEPTIVE EASE, HAWKEYE NOCKS ARROW AFTER ARROW, LETS FLY --
-- AND EACH SHAFT UNERRINGLY FINDS ITS MARK!
AAH!
NNH!
THOSE ARE SCREAMER ARROWS, ATLAS! THEY'LL RATTLE THOSE GOONS BRAINS -- KEEP 'EM OFF BALANCE! YOU DO THE REST!
GOT IT, BOSS!
THANKS FOR THE SAVE!
O-KAY! WHAT NOW, HAWKEYE?
FEED THEIR GAME RIGHT BACK AT 'EM, KID! EVERYBODY PARTNER UP --
-- AND SPLIT THEM APART! DON'T LET 'EM USE ANY TEAM TACTICS -- AND DON'T LET 'EM GET YOU ALONE!

AND WITH THAT, THE BATTLE'S AS GOOD AS OVER. IT JUST TAKES A WHILE --
THE MAN SAID TEAM UP -- MIND IF I WATCH YOUR BACK, ATLAS?
BE MY GUEST!
KRAMM
-- TO WRAP THINGS UP.
SPLOW
Ah-ah! WATCH IT, FELLAS -- MACH-1'S MY GUY!
THANKS, HONEY! AND HEADS UP -- ANOTHER GROUP COMIN' UP AT 12 O'CLOCK!
AND ONE BY ONE, THE HYDRA ASSASSINS FALL, SLOWLY BUT INEXORABLY--
-- UNTIL --
THERE! THAT'S THE LAST OF 'EM!
AND ATLAS BUSTED UP THE LEADER-MAN'S OUTFIT, SO HE'S NOT GOING TO BE GIVIN' US ANY MORE TROUBLE!
NICE WORK, T-BOLTS -- REAL NICE!
SIRENS!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TURNED THE TIDE, HAWKEYE.
PSHAW -- ALL I DID WAS PULL YOU TOGETHER -- GIVE YOU A LITTLE ORGANIZATION. YOU GUYS DID THE REAL WORK, AND YOU SHOULD BE--
WEOWEOWEOWEOWE

ATTENTION, YOU IN THE RESTAURANT! WE HAVE THE BUILDING SURROUNDED -- AND HELICOPTERS ARE MOVING INTO POSITION!
COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP -- BEFORE WE COME IN AFTER YOU!
Aw, NUTS -- THIS IS WHAT I WAS AFRAID OF! GETTING ATTACKED BY PSYCHOS LIKE HYDRA, THAT COMES WITH THE TERRITORY --
-- BUT WE CAN'T FIGHT COPS--!
THEY'RE ALL LOOKING TO ME FOR A DECISION, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. I PROMISED 'EM A CHANCE -- I CAN'T LET 'EM GET CAPTURED --
WE HAVE LONGER RANGE PROBLEMS, AS WELL -- SINCE HYDRA IS PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF SENDING MORE SQUADS AFTER US UNTIL WE'RE DEAD.
IF I MIGHT MAKE A SUGGESTION..?
Huh? SURE, GO AHEAD.
IT'S REALLY VERY SIMPLE...
SHE MURMURS INTO THE ARCHER'S EAR, TOO SOFTLY FOR THE HYDRA LEADER TO HEAR --
-- AND, WHEN SHE'S DONE --
YEAH? YEAH, NOT BAD -- LET'S GIVE IT A TRY...
I'VE GOT TO ADJUST MY THINKIN' -- THIS IS WAY DIFFERENT FROM BEIN' WITH THE AVENGERS.
BUT IT'LL WORK -- I'LL MAKE IT WORK.
Ah, GAYLE -- YOU'RE A PART OF THIS, IF YOU'RE WILLING.
WE NEED YOU TO GO TALK TO THE COPS --
-- POINT OUT THAT IF THEY TRY TO TAKE US, IT'LL TAKE A WHILE, THESE HYDRA GUYS'LL WAKE UP, AND WE CAN'T GUARANTEE ANYONE'S SAFETY.
BUT IF THE T-BOLTS ARE ALLOWED TO GO --
-- THEY'VE GOT THE HYDRA SQUAD, AT LEAST, AND THAT'S SOMETHING.
SURE, I'LL TRY TO SELL IT TO THEM. I NEED TO GO OUT TO REACH A REAL CAMERAMAN, ANYWAY...

AND, ONCE GAYLE ROGERS IS GONE, MOONSTONE BEGINS THE SECOND PART OF HER PLAN...
STAY STILL, COMMANDER -- THIS WON'T HURT, IF YOU DON'T MAKE ANY SUDDEN MOVES. I'M ABSORBING ALL YOUR KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HYDRA --
-- EVERY ROTTEN LITTLE DETAIL ABOUT YOUR OPERATIONS, SUPERIORS AND MORE.
WHEN YOU GET TO TALK TO A LAWYER, YOU SHOULD SEND THE MESSAGE BACK TO HYDRA TO LAY OFF THE T-BOLTS --
WHAT? BUT--
-- OR I'LL PASS ALL THAT DATA ON TO THE AVENGERS AND S.H.I.E.L.D.
OUR FILES SAY NOTHING ABOUT YOU HAVING MENTAL POWERS! YOU'RE BLUFFING!
ARE YOU SURE YOU WANT TO RISK THAT... HORST?
YOU -- KNOW MY NAME?
ONLY FROM TALKING WITH TECHNO. PHASING MY HAND INTO HIS SKULL TOLD ME NOTHING -- BUT THERE'S NO NEED FOR HIM TO KNOW THAT.
I'D BE AS CONVINCING AS POSSIBLE IN THAT MESSAGE, HORST. IF WE USE THIS KNOWLEDGE, YOUR BOSSES'LL BE VERY UNHAPPY...WITH YOU...
AND SOON...
THE COPS LET US GO -- THEY JUST LET US GO!
HAWKEYE'S GOT A REPORTER ON OUR SIDE -- AND THE COPS LISTENING. IF ME GOING TO JAIL BUYS THE OTHERS THAT KIND OF CHANCE --
-- IT'S MORE THAN WORTH IT.
IT SEEMS I'VE MADE MY DECISION. I'LL STAY.
HAWKEYE'S COMMANDING, CONFIDENT, AND GOOD IN A FIGHT -- BUT HE SEEMS QUITE PLIABLE, AS WELL. IF IT'S THIS EASY TO CONTROL HIM --
-- THINGS MAY JUST BE EASIER THAN I'D THOUGHT...!

BUT MOONSTONE MIGHT WANT TO RECONSIDER HOW EASY THINGS WILL BE, IF SHE COULD SEE THE REACTIONS TONIGHT'S NEWS BRINGS --
THIS IS GAYLE ROGERS, OUTSIDE BOULDER'S ROYALTON TOWERS HOTEL --
-- IN THE JUNGLES OF SOUTH AMERICA --
-- WHERE EARLIER TONIGHT, LONGTIME AVENGER AND REDEEMED OUTLAW HAWKEYE LED THE FUGITIVE THUNDERBOLTS TO A STUNNING VICTORY --
AND ONCE AGAIN, THUNDERBOLTS, YOU DODGE RETRIBUTION.
BUT NO MATTER. IT WILL MAKE IT ALL THE MORE PLEASURABLE, WHEN YOUR FINAL DOWNFALL COMES -- AT THE HANDS OF BARON ZEMO!
-- IN THE SECRET ROCKY MOUNTAIN BASE OF THE CRIMSON COWL --
-- OVER A DOZEN HYDRA AGENTS ARE IN CUSTODY TONIGHT, THANKS TO --
WITH HAWKEYE LEADING THEM, THE THUNDERBOLTS WILL BE MORE FORMIDABLE THAN EVER. BUT THAT WON'T HELP THEM --
-- NOT IF THEY MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE MASTERS OF EVIL--!
-- IN DENVER --
-- KEPT THE DAMAGE CONTAINED, SAID POLICE --
THIS WON'T STOP ME. I ADOPTED THE GUISE OF CITIZEN V TO SEE JUSTICE DONE --
-- ON ZEMO, AND ALL THOSE WHO FOLLOWED HIM.
IF HAWKEYE'S IN THE WAY, THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM. IT'S HIS.
-- AND IN NEW YORK, AT THE WORLD-FAMOUS AVENGERS MANSION.
-- AND DEBATE RAGES OVER HAWKEYE'S PART IN TONIGHT'S--
WHAT DO YOU THINK, CAPTAIN AMERICA? MIND-CONTROL?
POSSIBLE, VISION. HAWKEYE'S BEEN A FRIEND AND ALLY FOR A LONG TIME. SO WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS... SOON.
WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?
ONLY TIME WILL TELL! FOLLOW ALL THE ACTION, ADVENTURE AND DRAMA,
FIRST IN AVENGERS #12
-- AND THEN IN EVERY MONTHLY ISSUE OF THUNDERBOLTS
BE THERE!

MARVEL COMICS
DOUBLE-SIZED
ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!
EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES
the AVENGERS
JAN
#12
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MARVEL COMICS

DOUBLE-SIZED ANNIVERSARY ISSUE!

JAN
#12

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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES

the AVENGERS®

GEORGE PEREZ

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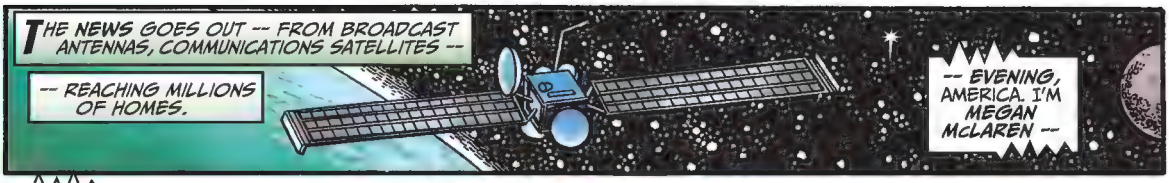
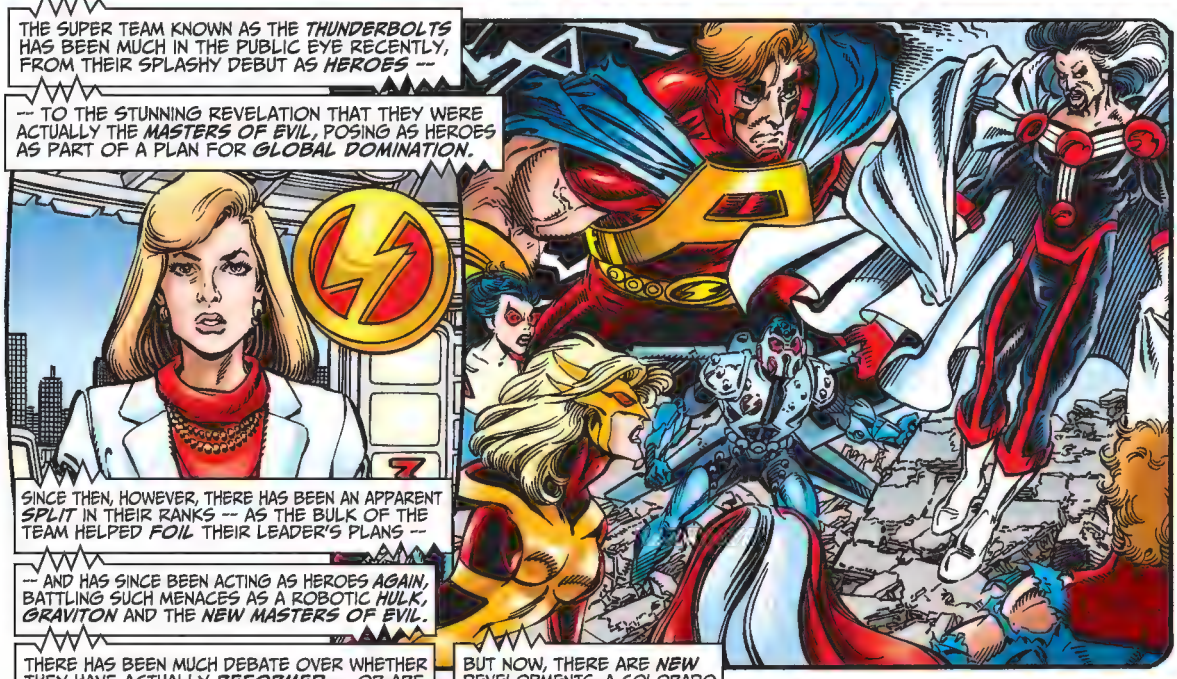
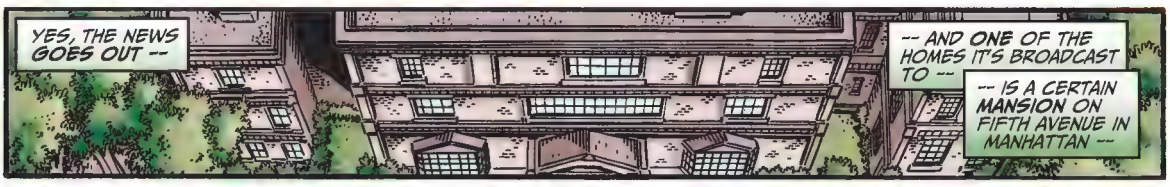

THE NEWS GOES OUT -- FROM BROADCAST ANTENNAS, COMMUNICATIONS SATELLITES --
-- REACHING MILLIONS OF HOMES.
-- EVENING, AMERICA. I'M MEGAN McLAREN --


THE SUPER TEAM KNOWN AS THE THUNDERBOLTS HAS BEEN MUCH IN THE PUBLIC EYE RECENTLY, FROM THEIR SPLASHY DEBUT AS HEROES --
-- TO THE STUNNING REVELATION THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY THE MASTERS OF EVIL, POSING AS HEROES AS PART OF A PLAN FOR GLOBAL DOMINATION.
SINCE THEN, HOWEVER, THERE HAS BEEN AN APPARENT SPLIT IN THEIR RANKS -- AS THE BULK OF THE TEAM HELPED FOIL THEIR LEADER'S PLANS --
-- AND HAS SINCE BEEN ACTING AS HEROES AGAIN, BATTLING SUCH MENACES AS A ROBOTIC HULK, GRAVITON AND THE NEW MASTERS OF EVIL.
THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DEBATE OVER WHETHER THEY HAVE ACTUALLY REFORMED -- OR ARE MERELY ATTEMPTING ANOTHER DECEPTION.*
BUT NOW, THERE ARE NEW DEVELOPMENTS. A COLORADO NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER TOOK THIS PICTURE --
*IF YOU READ THE REGULAR T-BOLTS BOOK, YOU ALREADY KNOW THIS! IF YOU DON'T -- WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? -- EDITS-IT-TOO TOM.
-- SHOWING TWO OF THE THUNDERBOLTS BEING RESCUED FROM A NATIONAL GUARD CORDON BY HAWKEYE, THE WELL-KNOWN AVENGER.*
WHY HAWKEYE IS AIDING THE THUNDERBOLTS -- AND WHETHER HE IS DOING IT OF HIS OWN FREE WILL -- IS UNKNOWN AT THE MOMENT --
*AS SEEN IN T-BOLTS #21 -- TOM



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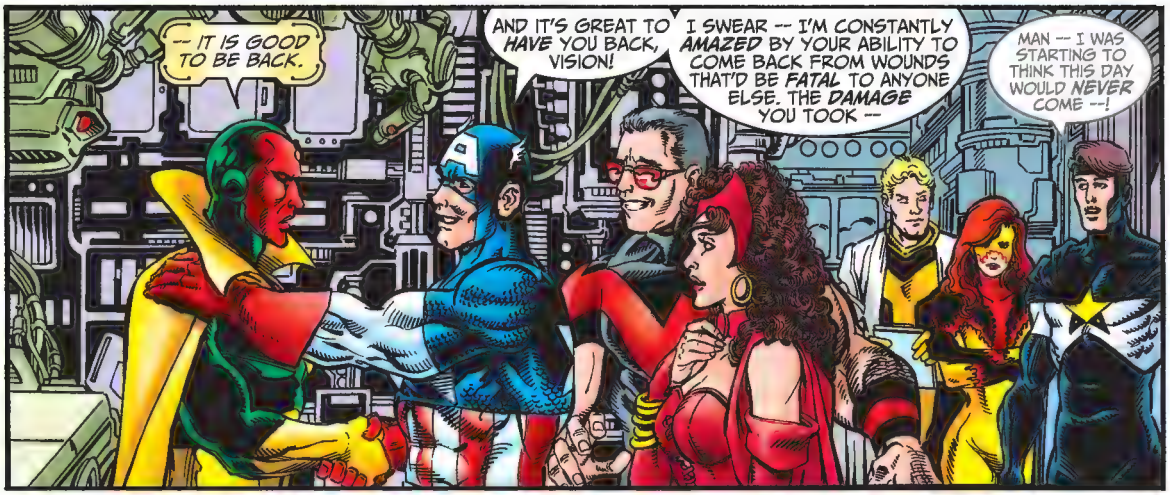
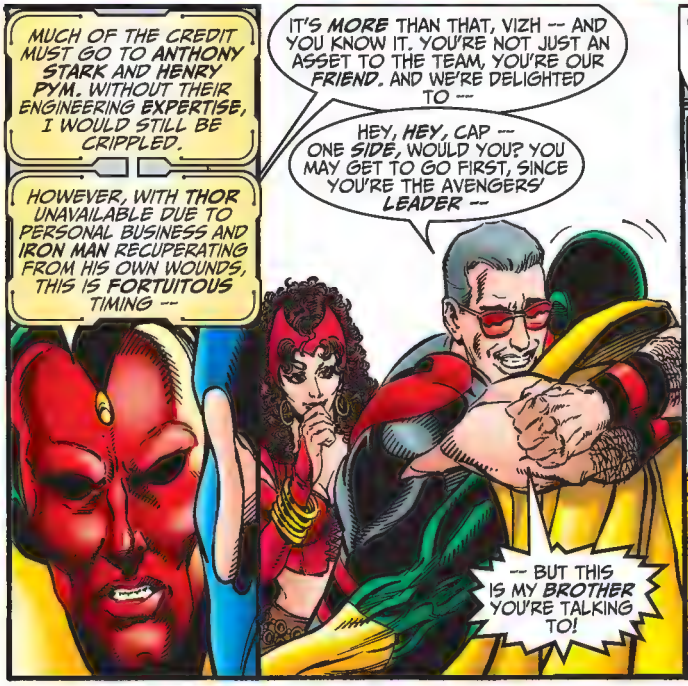
-- HEADQUARTERS OF THE MIGHTY AVENGERS --
BLAST IT -- STILL NO RESPONSE!
HAWKEYE HASN'T RESPONDED TO ANY COMMUNICARD CALLS SINCE IRON MAN LAST SPOKE TO HIM -- AND THAT WAS WEEKS AGO!*
*IN THE WAKE OF THE IRON MAN/CAPTAIN AMERICA '98 ANNUAL -- TOM
HOW ARE YOU COMING ALONG, FIRESTAR?
NOT GREAT. HIS CARD'S LOCATOR CHIP HAS BEEN SHUT OFF -- BUT THERE'S NO WAY TO KNOW WHETHER HE DID IT OR THE THUNDERBOLTS DID.
I'VE JUST PUT THE OVERRIDE PROGRAM ON AUTOMATIC -- IT'LL KEEP TRYING UNTIL IT BREAKS THROUGH THE CARD'S LOCK AND TELLS US WHERE HE IS.
GOOD.
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE FINDING CLINT A PRIORITY. THE THUNDERBOLTS MENTALLY CONTROLLED THE AVENGERS BEFORE --*
-- BUT THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO LET THEM DO IT TWICE!
AH, CAP? REMEMBER, IT WAS BARON ZEMO WHO DID THAT --
-- AND THE THUNDERBOLTS HELPED US OVERTHROW HIM. THIS MAY NOT BE WHAT YOU'RE ASSUMING IT TO BE.
IF I'M WRONG, WANDA, I'LL APOLOGIZE. BUT UNTIL HAWKEYE'S SAFE, I --
CAP...?
FIRESTAR SAYS YOU'VE GOT THINGS ON AUTOMATIC, CAP. IF I COULD ASK YOU ALL TO COME TO LAB FOUR -- I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.
-- JUST SAW ARKON IV ON TAPE LAST NIGHT, WONDER MAN --
WE'RE HERE, HANK. WHAT'S UP?
FUNNY YOU SHOULD PUT IT THAT WAY, CAP.
BECAUSE I'M HAPPY TO SAY THAT WHAT'S UP -- AS IN UP-AND-AROUND-ONCE-MORE -- IS NONE OTHER --
*IN T-BOLTS #11-12. SEE WHAT YOU'VE BEEN MISSING? -- TOM

Stan Lee presents:
THE WRAP-UP TO EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES'S FIRST BIG YEAR BACK IN BUSINESS
OLD ENTANGLEMENTS
KURT Busiek by GEORGE Perez
-- THE EVERYBODY'S FAVORITE SYNTHEZOID AVENGER --
-- THE VISION!
THANK YOU, DR. PYM.
THE RE-MANUFACTURE AND REPAIR OF MY SHATTERED LOWER LIMBS HAS TAKEN A GREAT DEAL OF TIME INDEED. BUT I MUST SAY --
AL VEY & BOB WIACEK finishes
TOM SMITH colors
Richard Starkings & COMICRAFT/WA letters
TOM BREVOORT editor
BOB HARRAS editor in chief

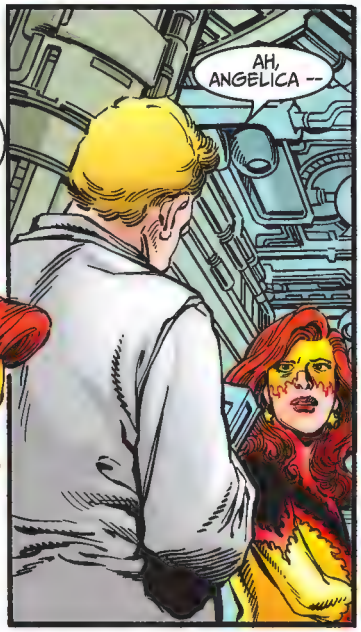

-- IT IS GOOD TO BE BACK.
AND IT'S GREAT TO HAVE YOU BACK, VISION!
I SWEAR -- I'M CONSTANTLY AMAZED BY YOUR ABILITY TO COME BACK FROM WOUNDS THAT'D BE FATAL TO ANYONE ELSE. THE DAMAGE YOU TOOK --
MAN -- I WAS STARTING TO THINK THIS DAY WOULD NEVER COME --!


MUCH OF THE CREDIT MUST GO TO ANTHONY STARK AND HENRY PYM. WITHOUT THEIR ENGINEERING EXPERTISE, I WOULD STILL BE CRIPPLED.
HOWEVER, WITH THOR UNAVAILABLE DUE TO PERSONAL BUSINESS AND IRON MAN RECUPERATING FROM HIS OWN WOUNDS, THIS IS FORTUITOUS TIMING --
IT'S MORE THAN THAT, VIZH -- AND YOU KNOW IT. YOU'RE NOT JUST AN ASSET TO THE TEAM, YOU'RE OUR FRIEND. AND WE'RE DELIGHTED TO --
HEY, HEY, CAP -- ONE SIDE, WOULD YOU? YOU MAY GET TO GO FIRST, SINCE YOU'RE THE AVENGERS' LEADER --
-- BUT THIS IS MY BROTHER YOU'RE TALKING TO!

WE WILLIAMS BOYS HAVE A HABIT OF SURVIVING, DON'T WE? ME, BACK FROM THE DEAD -- YOU BACK FROM MECHANICAL DAMAGE!*
ISN'T IT GREAT?
IT IS... MOST WELCOME, SIMON.
I'LL LEAVE YOU FOLKS TO CELEBRATE, WANDA. IF ANY ONE NEEDS ME --
*WONDER MAN WAS RESURRECTED LAST ISSUE -- TOM

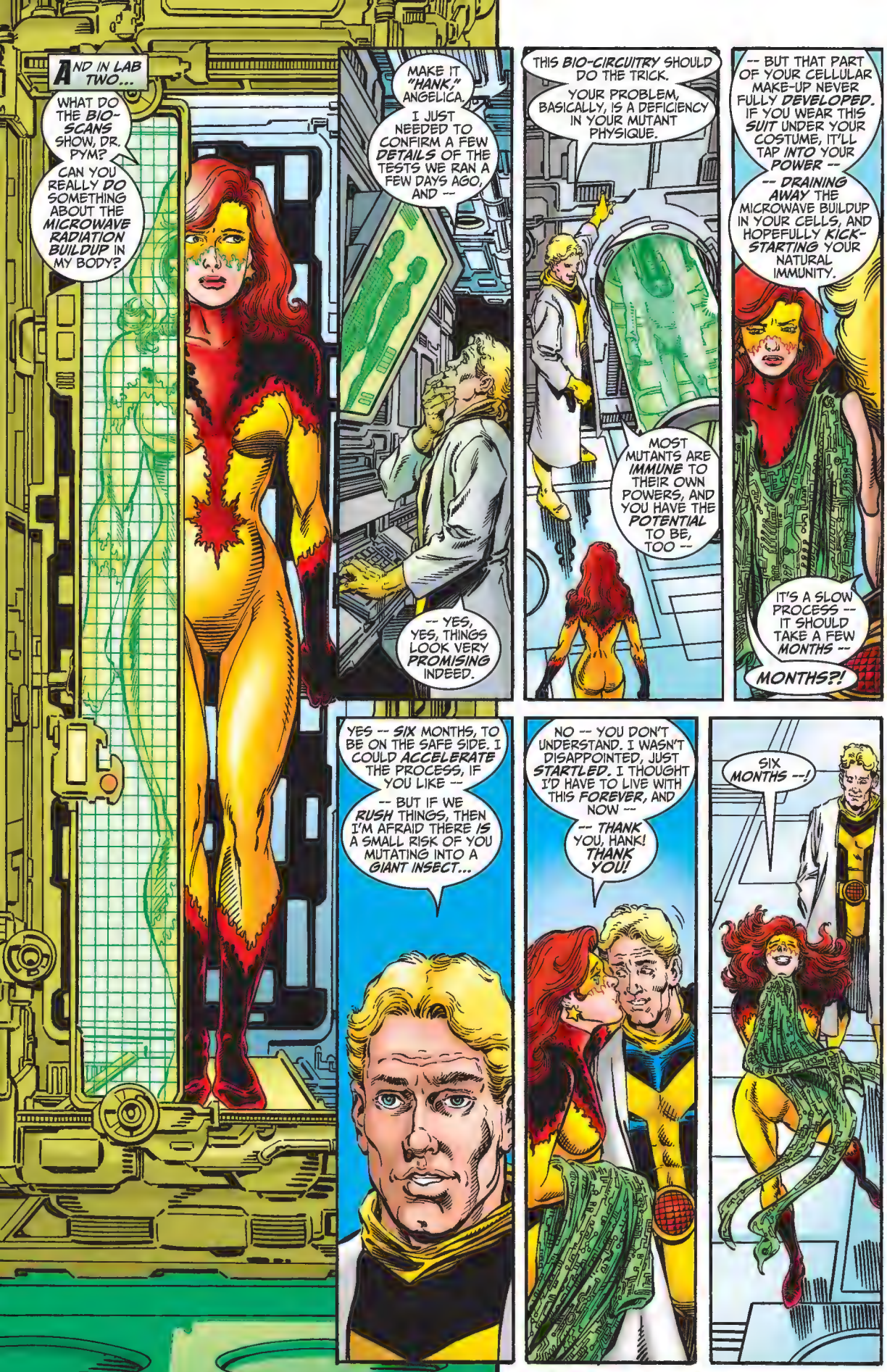
-- I'LL BE IN THE "PLAY-ROOM."
MAN. JUST BEING HERE IS SO AMAZING. CAPTAIN AMERICA, THE VISION, THE SCARLET WITCH, WONDER MAN. THEY'RE LEGENDS, ALL OF THEM --

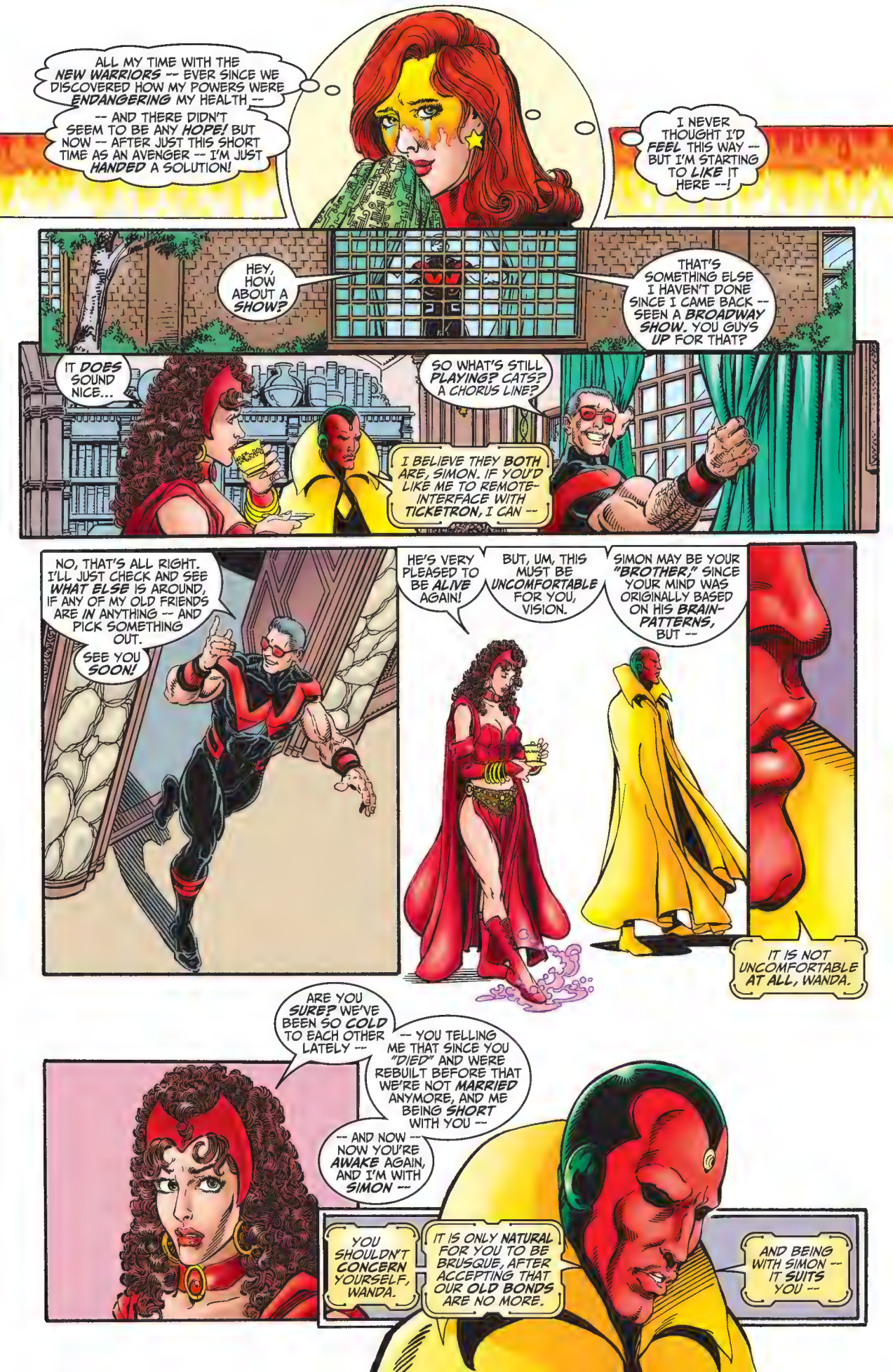
-- THEY'RE LEGENDS -- AND NEXT TO THAT, WHAT AM I?
IT'S GREAT THAT THE VISION CAN BE REBUILT LIKE THAT. I WISH -- I WISH MY PROBLEMS COULD BE SOLVED AS EASILY...


AH, ANGELICA --

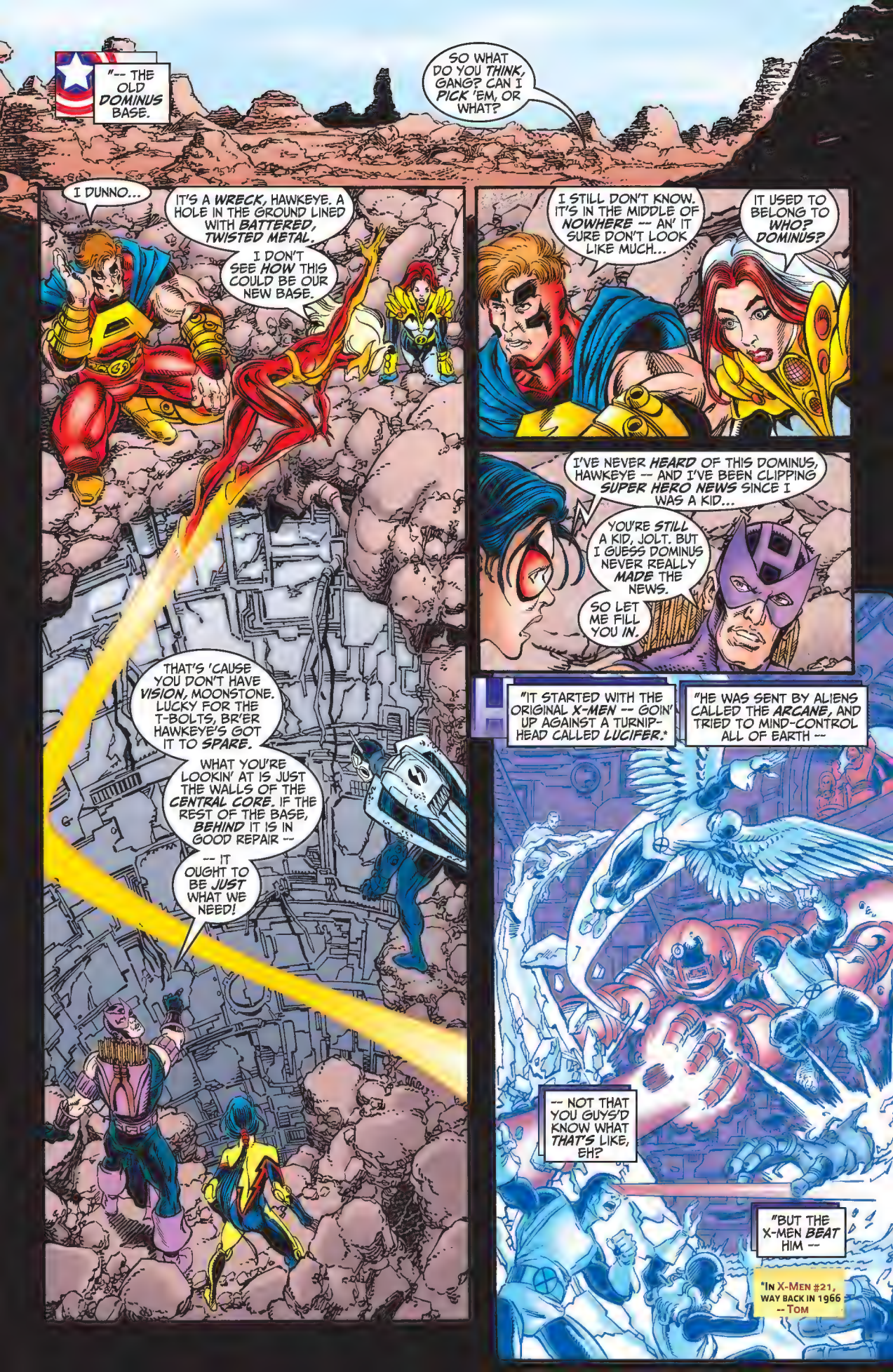
-- IF YOU'VE GOT A MINUTE, I HAVE A COUPLE OF THINGS TO GO OVER WITH YOU IN LAB TWO --
SURE, DR. PYM. EXCUSE ME A SEC, VANCE --
-- I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU IN A LITTLE BIT, OKAY?
NO PROB, ANGEL. I... WANT TO TALK TO CAP ABOUT SOMETHING ANYWAY.
THIS IS SO GREAT!
WE'VE GOT TO PAINT THE TOWN RED, VIZH -- YOU, ME AND WANDA! MAKE A NIGHT OF IT, TALK OVER OLD TIMES!
WANDA AND I'VE BEEN LOOKING UP ALL MY OLD HAUNTS RECENTLY, FINDING OUT WHICH ONES ARE STILL AROUND AND WHICH --
-- UH, MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT. I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE ANY TROUBLE, AND IF IT BOTHERS YOU TO HEAR ABOUT --
DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF, SIMON. WANDA'S AND MY TIME TOGETHER ENDED LONG AGO. IT IS... NOT A PROBLEM FOR ME.
AND IF SIMON WILLIAMS MISSES THE SLIGHT RESERVE IN THE VISION'S EVENLY-MODULATED ELECTRONIC VOICE --
-- WELL, HE DOESN'T HAVE THE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE WANDA HAS --
THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR -- THE LAST THING I WANT TO DO IS HURT YOU.
HEY, MAYBE I SHOULD CALL THE BEAST -- LET HIM KNOW I'M BACK, SEE IF HE WANTS TO COME ALONG, TOO.
I'VE BROUGHT TEA, SIRS AND MADAM. IF YOU DON'T NEED ANYTHING ELSE --
-- I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT AT EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY, TO TAKE LUPE TO DINNER. SHE STILL DOESN'T KNOW MANY PEOPLE HERE. AND --*
*MARIA DE GUADALUPE SANTIAGO, AKA SILVERCLAW -- TOM
OF COURSE, JARVIS. HAVE A GOOD TIME, AND GIVE LUPE OUR BEST WISHES.

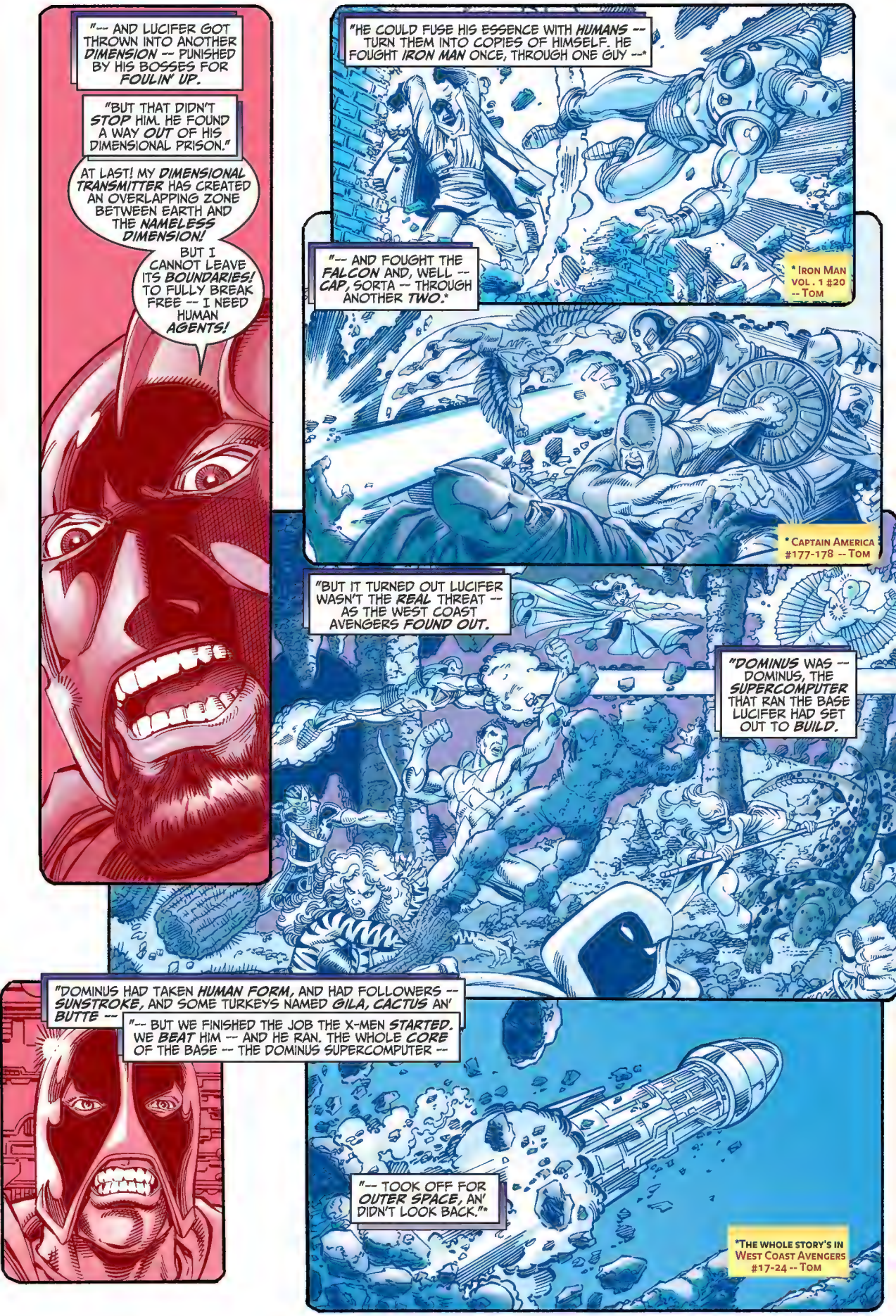
MEANWHILE, IN THE COMBAT SIMULATION ROOM --
UH... CAP?
JUSTICE -- COME ON IN, FELLA.
I'M A LITTLE WOUND UP OVER HAWKEYE, AND WHAT MIGHT BE HAPPENING. I THOUGHT A WORKOUT MIGHT LOOSEN ME UP. CARE TO JOIN ME?
WELL -- YEAH, SURE!
TEK TAP TEK TAP
GREAT -- I'VE PROGRAMMED THE ROOM FOR TWO, SO -- WHAT'S UP?
IT'S JUST -- THERE'S THIS PROBLEM, AND I'M HAVING A HARD TIME GETTING PAST IT.
I'VE ALWAYS IDOLIZED THE AVENGERS, EVER SINCE YOU GOT STARTED, AND IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY DREAM TO JOIN THE TEAM. AND NOW I HAVE --
-- AND WELL, IT'S NOT WHAT I THOUGHT IT'D BE LIKE. I'M NERVOUS ALL THE TIME, I'M SCARED OF SCREWING UP, OF LETTING YOU DOWN --
COMBAT SIMULATION LEVEL CA-1-E2
YOU CAN'T GET PAST YOUR OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF US. WE'RE STILL CELEBRITIES TO YOU, AND NOT YET TEAMMATES.
SOMETHING LIKE THAT. EXCEPT I WAS THINKING LEGENDS, NOT CELEBRITIES.
BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL.
I WASN'T MUCH OLDER THAN YOU ARE NOW WHEN I FIRST BECAME CAPTAIN AMERICA, AND MY SHIELD --
-- NOT THIS ENERGY-SHIELD, BUT THE ONE I USED FOR YEARS --
-- WAS GIVEN TO ME BY PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT. WHEN I FIRST MET HIM --
PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT. HE ACTUALLY MET F.D.R. -- MORE THAN ONCE! AND HE THINKS TELLING ME ABOUT IT -- WILL MAKE ME LESS NERVOUS?
PROGRAM ACTIVATED
ZKAM
UH!
LOOK ALIVE, JUSTICE! THE COMBAT'S PROGRAM STARTED!
SORRY, CAP! BUT BELIEVE ME -- I'M AWAKE NOW!

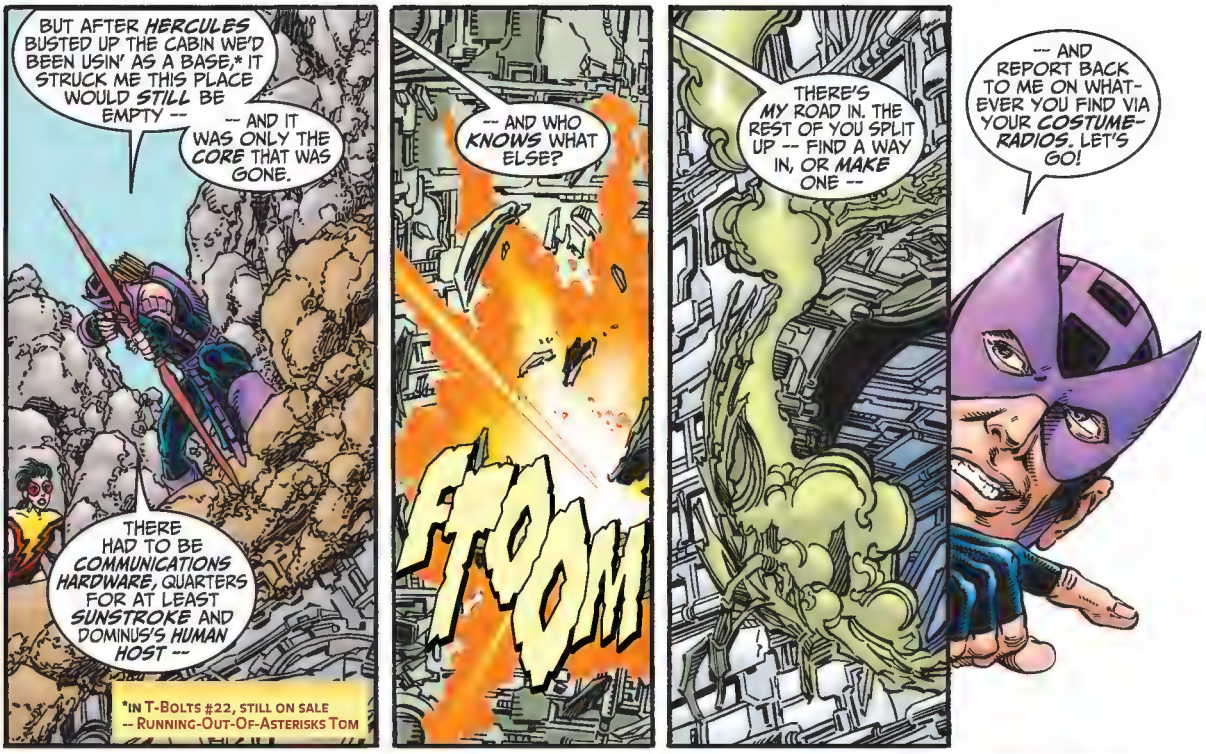

AND IN LAB TWO...
WHAT DO THE BIO-SCANS SHOW, DR. PYM?
CAN YOU REALLY DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE MICROWAVE RADIATION BUILDUP IN MY BODY?
MAKE IT "HANK," ANGELICA.
I JUST NEEDED TO CONFIRM A FEW DETAILS OF THE TESTS WE RAN A FEW DAYS AGO, AND --
-- YES, YES, THINGS LOOK VERY PROMISING INDEED.
THIS BIO-CIRCUITRY SHOULD DO THE TRICK.
YOUR PROBLEM, BASICALLY, IS A DEFICIENCY IN YOUR MUTANT PHYSIQUE.
MOST MUTANTS ARE IMMUNE TO THEIR OWN POWERS, AND YOU HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE, TOO --
-- BUT THAT PART OF YOUR CELLULAR MAKE-UP NEVER FULLY DEVELOPED. IF YOU WEAR THIS SUIT UNDER YOUR COSTUME, IT'LL TAP INTO YOUR POWER --
-- DRAINING AWAY THE MICROWAVE BUILDUP IN YOUR CELLS, AND HOPEFULLY KICK-STARTING YOUR NATURAL IMMUNITY.
IT'S A SLOW PROCESS -- IT SHOULD TAKE A FEW MONTHS --
MONTHS?!
YES -- SIX MONTHS, TO BE ON THE SAFE SIDE. I COULD ACCELERATE THE PROCESS, IF YOU LIKE --
-- BUT IF WE RUSH THINGS, THEN I'M AFRAID THERE IS A SMALL RISK OF YOU MUTATING INTO A GIANT INSECT...
NO -- YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND. I WASN'T DISAPPOINTED, JUST STARTLED. I THOUGHT I'D HAVE TO LIVE WITH THIS FOREVER, AND NOW --
-- THANK YOU, HANK! THANK YOU!
SIX MONTHS --!

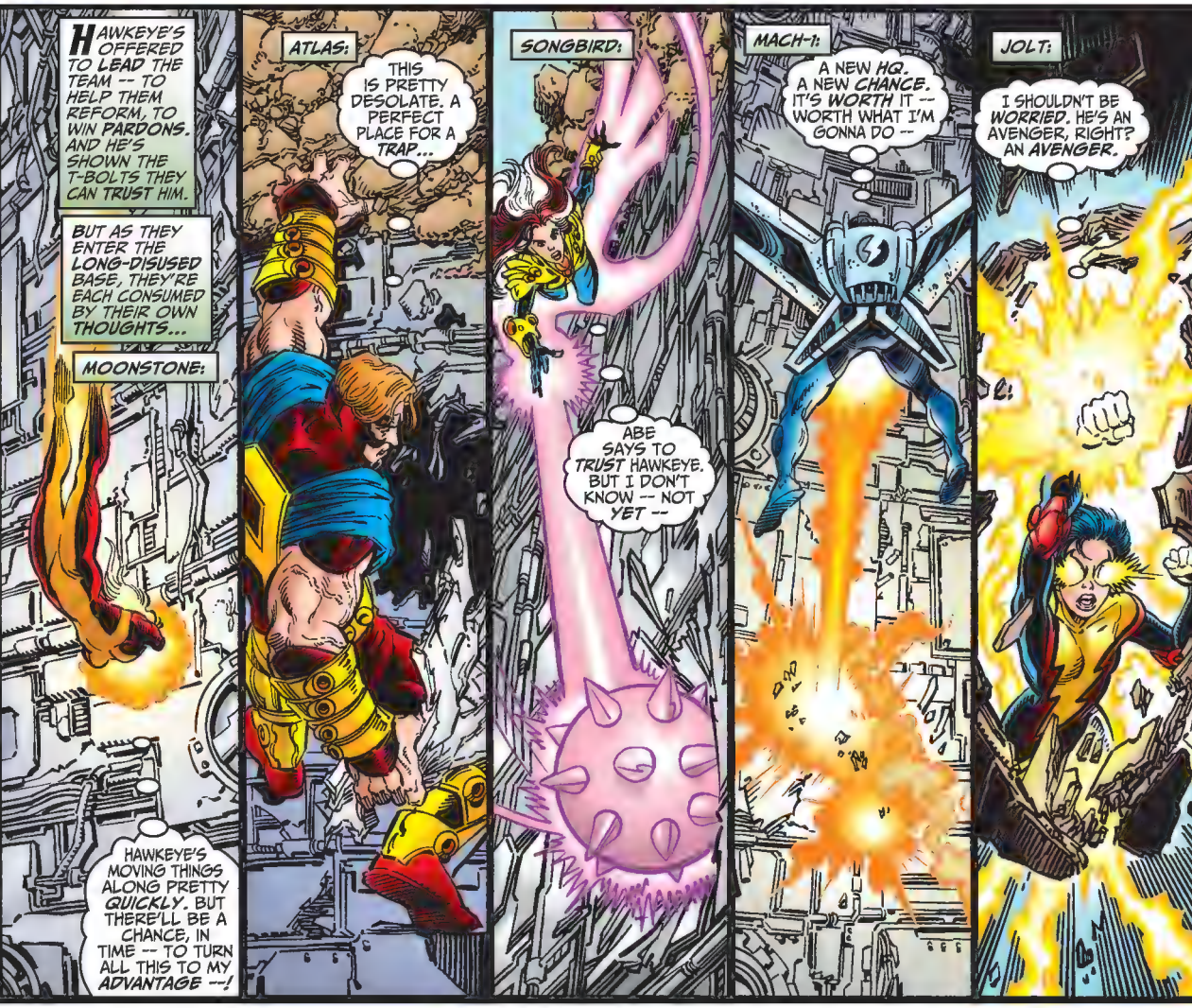

ALL MY TIME WITH THE NEW WARRIORS -- EVER SINCE WE DISCOVERED HOW MY POWERS WERE ENDANGERING MY HEALTH --
-- AND THERE DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ANY HOPE! BUT NOW -- AFTER JUST THIS SHORT TIME AS AN AVENGER -- I'M JUST HANDED A SOLUTION!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D FEEL THIS WAY -- BUT I'M STARTING TO LIKE IT HERE --!
HEY, HOW ABOUT A SHOW?
THAT'S SOMETHING ELSE I HAVEN'T DONE SINCE I CAME BACK -- SEEN A BROADWAY SHOW. YOU GUYS UP FOR THAT?
IT DOES SOUND NICE...
SO WHAT'S STILL PLAYING? CATS? A CHORUS LINE?
I BELIEVE THEY BOTH ARE, SIMON. IF YOU'D LIKE ME TO REMOTE-INTERFACE WITH TICKETRON, I CAN --
NO, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I'LL JUST CHECK AND SEE WHAT ELSE IS AROUND, IF ANY OF MY OLD FRIENDS ARE IN ANYTHING -- AND PICK SOMETHING OUT.
SEE YOU SOON!
HE'S VERY PLEASED TO BE ALIVE AGAIN!
BUT, UM, THIS MUST BE UNCOMFORTABLE FOR YOU, VISION.
SIMON MAY BE YOUR "BROTHER," SINCE YOUR MIND WAS ORIGINALLY BASED ON HIS BRAIN-PATTERNS, BUT --
IT IS NOT UNCOMFORTABLE AT ALL, WANDA.
ARE YOU SURE? WE'VE BEEN SO COLD TO EACH OTHER LATELY --
-- YOU TELLING ME THAT SINCE YOU "DIED" AND WERE REBUILT BEFORE THAT WE'RE NOT MARRIED ANYMORE, AND ME BEING SHORT WITH YOU --
-- AND NOW -- NOW YOU'RE AWAKE AGAIN, AND I'M WITH SIMON --
YOU SHOULDN'T CONCERN YOURSELF, WANDA.
IT IS ONLY NATURAL FOR YOU TO BE BRUSQUE, AFTER ACCEPTING THAT OUR OLD BONDS ARE NO MORE.
AND BEING WITH SIMON -- IT SUITS YOU --

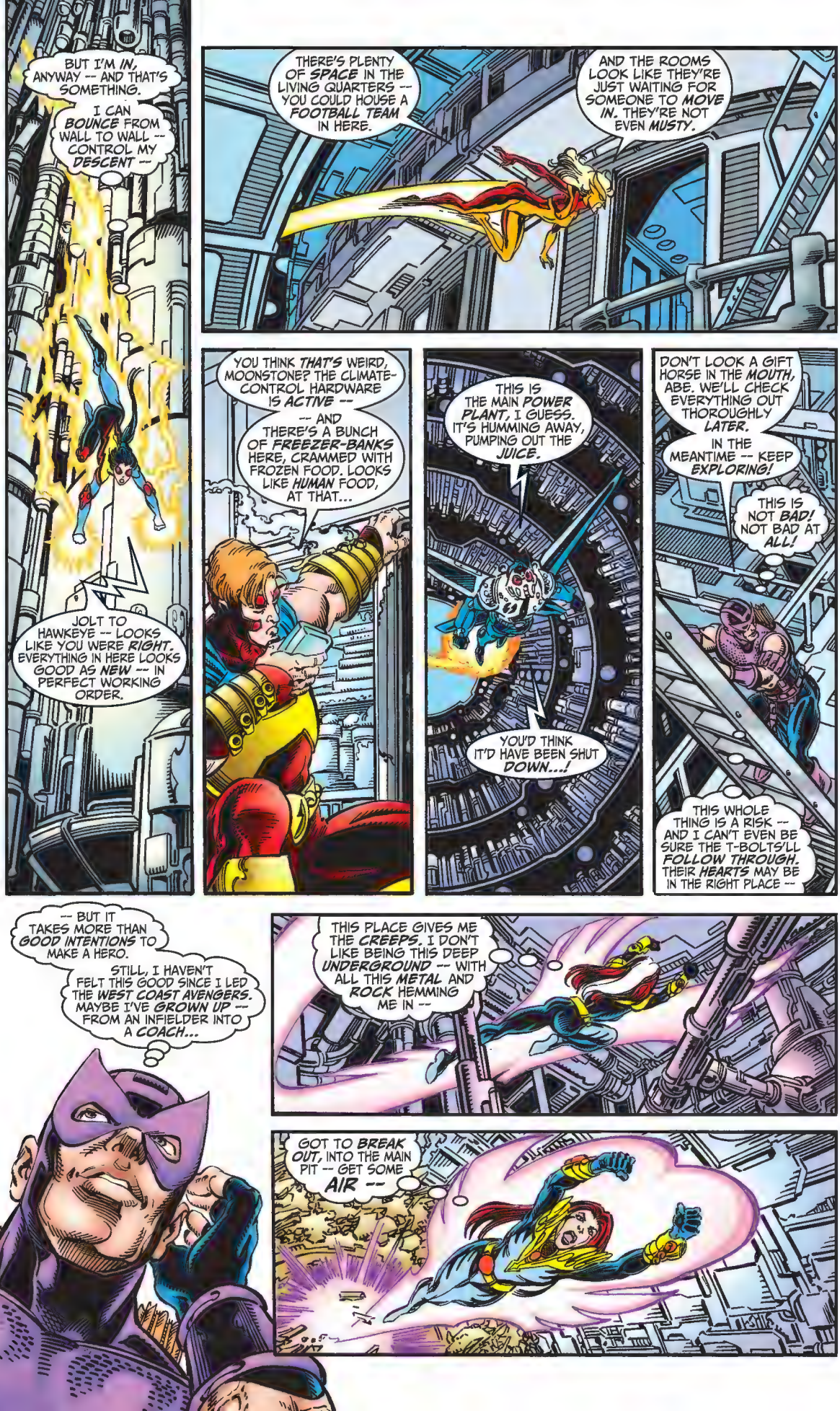
-- YOU ARE AS RADIANT AS YOU WERE ON THE BEACHES OF RURUTU --
WH-WHAT?
RURUTU. THAT WAS WHERE THEY HONEYMOONED. WHERE THEY WERE SO HAPPY.
BUT -- THE WAY HE SAID IT --
VISION, WHAT DID YOU --?
BLANGUANGBLANGUANGBLANGUANGBLANG
-- HUH?
HM?
WHAT --?
THE PRIORITY ALARM! BUT WHY --?
HANK? WHAT IS IT?
IT'S HAWKEYE -- THE COMPUTERS HAVE FOUND HIM. YOU'LL WANT TO HEAD OUT AFTER HIM IMMEDIATELY.
JARVIS IS OUT, SO I'LL STAY HERE ON MONITOR DUTY. I'M PUTTING THE GEOLOCATOR DATA UP ON THE SCREEN NOW.
PLEASE, HAVE EVERYONE ASSEMBLE IN THE QUINJET BAY, HANK. I'LL BE THERE DIRECTLY.
COME ON, JUSTICE -- QUICKLY.
WHAT? WHAT?
IT JUST LOOKED LIKE A MAP OF THE ARIZONA MOUNTAINS. IS IT SOMETHING BAD?
IT COULD BE.
HAWKEYE -- AND THE THUNDERBOLTS, IF HE'S STILL WITH THEM -- IS AT THE SITE OF ONE OF THE WEST COAST AVENGERS' DEADLIEST BATTLES --


"-- THE OLD DOMINUS BASE.
SO WHAT DO YOU THINK, GANG? CAN I PICK 'EM, OR WHAT?
I DUNNO...
IT'S A WRECK, HAWKEYE. A HOLE IN THE GROUND LINED WITH BATTERED, TWISTED METAL.
I DON'T SEE HOW THIS COULD BE OUR NEW BASE.
I STILL DON'T KNOW. IT'S IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE -- AN' IT SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE MUCH...
IT USED TO BELONG TO WHO? DOMINUS?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS DOMINUS, HAWKEYE -- AND I'VE BEEN CLIPPING SUPER HERO NEWS SINCE I WAS A KID...
YOU'RE STILL A KID, JOLT. BUT I GUESS DOMINUS NEVER REALLY MADE THE NEWS.
SO LET ME FILL YOU IN.
THAT'S 'CAUSE YOU DON'T HAVE VISION, MOONSTONE. LUCKY FOR THE T-BOLTS, BR'ER HAWKEYE'S GOT IT TO SPARE.
WHAT YOU'RE LOOKIN' AT IS JUST THE WALLS OF THE CENTRAL CORE. IF THE REST OF THE BASE, BEHIND IT IS IN GOOD REPAIR --
-- IT OUGHT TO BE JUST WHAT WE NEED!
"IT STARTED WITH THE ORIGINAL X-MEN -- GOIN' UP AGAINST A TURNIP-HEAD CALLED LUCIFER.*
"HE WAS SENT BY ALIENS CALLED THE ARCANE, AND TRIED TO MIND-CONTROL ALL OF EARTH --
-- NOT THAT YOU GUYS'D KNOW WHAT THAT'S LIKE, EH?
"BUT THE X-MEN BEAT HIM --
*IN X-MEN #21, WAY BACK IN 1966 -- TOM

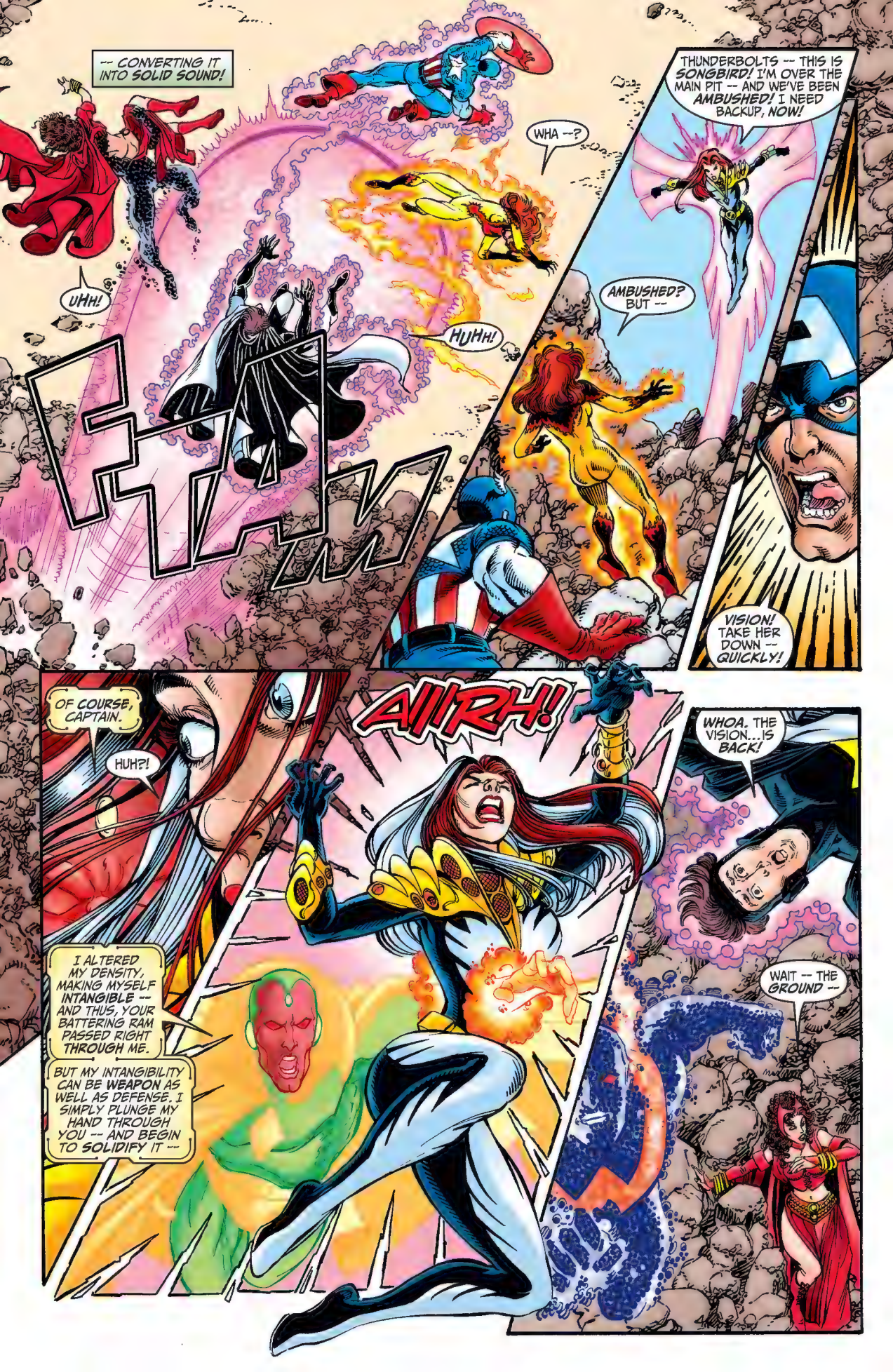

"-- AND LUCIFER GOT THROWN INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION -- PUNISHED BY HIS BOSSES FOR FOULIN' UP.
"BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM. HE FOUND A WAY OUT OF HIS DIMENSIONAL PRISON."
AT LAST! MY DIMENSIONAL TRANSMITTER HAS CREATED AN OVERLAPPING ZONE BETWEEN EARTH AND THE NAMELESS DIMENSION!
BUT I CANNOT LEAVE ITS BOUNDARIES! TO FULLY BREAK FREE -- I NEED HUMAN AGENTS!
"HE COULD FUSE HIS ESSENCE WITH HUMANS -- TURN THEM INTO COPIES OF HIMSELF. HE FOUGHT IRON MAN ONCE, THROUGH ONE GUY --*
* IRON MAN VOL. 1 #20 -- TOM
"-- AND FOUGHT THE FALCON AND, WELL -- CAP, SORTA -- THROUGH ANOTHER TWO.*
* CAPTAIN AMERICA #177-178 -- TOM
"BUT IT TURNED OUT LUCIFER WASN'T THE REAL THREAT -- AS THE WEST COAST AVENGERS FOUND OUT.
"DOMINUS WAS -- DOMINUS, THE SUPERCOMPUTER THAT RAN THE BASE LUCIFER HAD SET OUT TO BUILD.
"DOMINUS HAD TAKEN HUMAN FORM, AND HAD FOLLOWERS -- SUNSTROKE, AND SOME TURKEYS NAMED GILA, CACTUS AN' BUTTE --
"-- BUT WE FINISHED THE JOB THE X-MEN STARTED. WE BEAT HIM -- AND HE RAN. THE WHOLE CORE OF THE BASE -- THE DOMINUS SUPERCOMPUTER --
"-- TOOK OFF FOR OUTER SPACE, AN' DIDN'T LOOK BACK."*
*THE WHOLE STORY'S IN WEST COAST AVENGERS #17-24 -- TOM


BUT AFTER HERCULES BUSTED UP THE CABIN WE'D BEEN USIN' AS A BASE,* IT STRUCK ME THIS PLACE WOULD STILL BE EMPTY --
-- AND IT WAS ONLY THE CORE THAT WAS GONE.
THERE HAD TO BE COMMUNICATIONS HARDWARE, QUARTERS FOR AT LEAST SUNSTROKE AND DOMINUS'S HUMAN HOST --
*IN T-BOLTS #22, STILL ON SALE -- RUNNING-OUT-OF-ASTERISKS TOM
-- AND WHO KNOWS WHAT ELSE?
FTOOM
THERE'S MY ROAD IN. THE REST OF YOU SPLIT UP -- FIND A WAY IN, OR MAKE ONE --
-- AND REPORT BACK TO ME ON WHATEVER YOU FIND VIA YOUR COSTUME-RADIOS. LET'S GO!


HAWKEYE'S OFFERED TO LEAD THE TEAM -- TO HELP THEM REFORM, TO WIN PARDONS. AND HE'S SHOWN THE T-BOLTS THEY CAN TRUST HIM.
BUT AS THEY ENTER THE LONG-DISUSED BASE, THEY'RE EACH CONSUMED BY THEIR OWN THOUGHTS...
MOONSTONE:
HAWKEYE'S MOVING THINGS ALONG PRETTY QUICKLY. BUT THERE'LL BE A CHANCE, IN TIME -- TO TURN ALL THIS TO MY ADVANTAGE --!
ATLAS:
THIS IS PRETTY DESOLATE. A PERFECT PLACE FOR A TRAP...
SONGBIRD:
ABE SAYS TO TRUST HAWKEYE. BUT I DON'T KNOW -- NOT YET --
MACH-1:
A NEW HQ. A NEW CHANCE. IT'S WORTH IT -- WORTH WHAT I'M GONNA DO --
JOLT:
I SHOULDN'T BE WORRIED. HE'S AN AVENGER, RIGHT? AN AVENGER.


BUT I'M IN, ANYWAY -- AND THAT'S SOMETHING.
I CAN BOUNCE FROM WALL TO WALL -- CONTROL MY DESCENT --
JOLT TO HAWKEYE -- LOOKS LIKE YOU WERE RIGHT. EVERYTHING IN HERE LOOKS GOOD AS NEW -- IN PERFECT WORKING ORDER.
THERE'S PLENTY OF SPACE IN THE LIVING QUARTERS -- YOU COULD HOUSE A FOOTBALL TEAM IN HERE.
AND THE ROOMS LOOK LIKE THEY'RE JUST WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO MOVE IN. THEY'RE NOT EVEN MUSTY.
YOU THINK THAT'S WEIRD, MOONSTONE? THE CLIMATE-CONTROL HARDWARE IS ACTIVE --
-- AND THERE'S A BUNCH OF FREEZER-BANKS HERE, CRAMMED WITH FROZEN FOOD. LOOKS LIKE HUMAN FOOD, AT THAT...
THIS IS THE MAIN POWER PLANT, I GUESS. IT'S HUMMING AWAY, PUMPING OUT THE JUICE.
YOU'D THINK IT'D HAVE BEEN SHUT DOWN...!
DON'T LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH, ABE. WE'LL CHECK EVERYTHING OUT THOROUGHLY LATER.
IN THE MEANTIME -- KEEP EXPLORING!
THIS IS NOT BAD! NOT BAD AT ALL!
THIS WHOLE THING IS A RISK -- AND I CAN'T EVEN BE SURE THE T-BOLTS'LL FOLLOW THROUGH. THEIR HEARTS MAY BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE --
-- BUT IT TAKES MORE THAN GOOD INTENTIONS TO MAKE A HERO.
STILL, I HAVEN'T FELT THIS GOOD SINCE I LED THE WEST COAST AVENGERS. MAYBE I'VE GROWN UP -- FROM AN INFIELDER INTO A COACH...
THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS. I DON'T LIKE BEING THIS DEEP UNDERGROUND -- WITH ALL THIS METAL AND ROCK HEMMING ME IN --
GOT TO BREAK OUT, INTO THE MAIN PIT -- GET SOME AIR --

-- H-HUH?!
THERE'S ONE OF 'EM -- IT'S SONGBIRD!
I SEE HER, FIRESTAR.
IF YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOOD FOR YOU, MISS -- YOU'LL SURRENDER, ALL OF YOU. RIGHT NOW. AND YOU'LL TAKE US TO HAWKEYE.
THE AVENGERS!
THEN -- IT WAS ALL A LIE! HAWKEYE SCAMMED US -- AND WE WALKED RIGHT INTO THE TRAP!
WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YOU, CHAINMAIL --
-- YOU DON'T TAKE SONGBIRD THAT EASY!
SONGBIRD SCREAMS --
-- AND THE CIRCUITRY OF HER CARAPACE TAKES THE SCREAM, AUGMENTING AND MODIFYING IT --


-- CONVERTING IT INTO SOLID SOUND!
UHH!
WHA --?
HUHH!
FLAM
THUNDERBOLTS -- THIS IS SONGBIRD! I'M OVER THE MAIN PIT -- AND WE'VE BEEN AMBUSHED! I NEED BACKUP, NOW!
AMBUSHED? BUT --
VISION! TAKE HER DOWN -- QUICKLY!
OF COURSE, CAPTAIN.
HUH?!
AIIRH!
I ALTERED MY DENSITY, MAKING MYSELF INTANGIBLE -- AND THUS, YOUR BATTERING RAM PASSED RIGHT THROUGH ME.
BUT MY INTANGIBILITY CAN BE WEAPON AS WELL AS DEFENSE. I SIMPLY PLUNGE MY HAND THROUGH YOU -- AND BEGIN TO SOLIDIFY IT --
WHOA. THE VISION...IS BACK!
WAIT -- THE GROUND --

"--- IT'S MOVING ---!"
EH --?
NNH!
KRAM
GET AWAY FROM HER!
NOBODY GANGS UP ON A THUNDERBOLT -- NOT WHILE I'M --
-- HUH? THE AVENGERS --?
YES, ATLAS -- THE AVENGERS! THEY'VE ATTACKED US --
-- SO LET'S DEFEND OURSELVES!
UHH!
DON'T KNOW WHAT THE AVENGERS ARE DOING HERE -- BUT I'LL BET HAWKEYE DIDN'T CALL THEM!
STILL, I DON'T WANT THE T-BOLTS CAPTURED -- NOT AFTER ALL THE TIME AND EFFORT I'VE PUT IN --!
REGROUP, AVENGERS! THERE ARE ONLY THREE OF THEM AT THE MOMENT --
-- BUT THE OTHERS CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND! SO HIT 'EM HARD --
-- WE WANT TO END THIS FAST!
WHAT DO YOU KNOW? MY FIRST FOE SINCE I CAME BACK -- AND IT'S MY OLD IONIC IMITATOR. SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE, I GUESS.
OH, YEAH?!

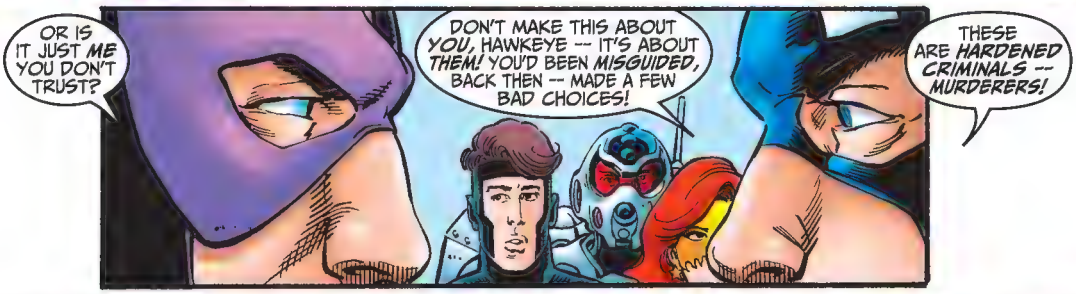
I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT'S CHANGED, YOU LOUSY --
--BUHHH!
SURE, SURE. YOU MAY HAVE A NEW FACE AND COSTUME, JOSTEN -- BUT YOU'RE STILL THE SAME DUMB PLUG-UGLY YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN --
-- EVER SINCE YOU GOT CHARGED UP IN THE MACHINES THAT GAVE ME MY POWERS! AND YOU'RE STILL THE SAME SECOND-RATE COPY --
-- EVEN WITH YOUR GROWING POWERS! AND IF THAT PUNCH DIDN'T CONVINCE YOU, THEN THIS ONE'LL --
--PTHAHH!
SPLAMM
HUH? WHAT --
WE'RE OUTNUMBERED, ATLAS! SO DO LIKE WE WERE TAUGHT -- WATCH YOUR TEAMMATES' BACKS -- AND WE'LL WATCH YOURS!
KEEP SWITCHING TARGETS! KEEP MOVING!
OKAY!
KRAKOOM
WHOA!

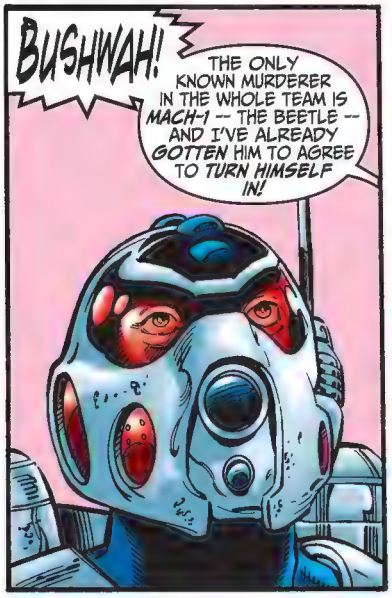
YOU'RE BIG, ATLAS -- AND YOU THINK THAT MAKES YOU THREATENING!
BUT ALL IT MEANS TO ME --
SPAMM
-- IS THAT YOU'VE GOT FARTHER TO FALL!
TFOOM
YEAH, YEAH --
-- TELL ME ABOUT IT.
NICE MOVE, CAPTAIN AMERICA -- BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH! NOT WHEN THE REST OF THE T-BOLTS ARE HERE!
JOLT -- WONDER MAN'S COMING UP BEHIND ATLAS! DELAY HIM!
UH -- OKAY!
THEY'RE THE AVENGERS -- I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THEM! BUT -- THEY'RE ATTACKING MY TEAM --!
THE THUNDERBOLTS ARE ORGANIZED -- WORKING MORE SMOOTHLY TOGETHER THAN THE AVENGERS, IN FACT!
THEY'VE BEEN TRAINING -- AND TRAINING WELL! AND SOME OF THEIR MOVES SEEM FAMILIAR --
"-- ALMOST AS IF THEY'D HAD AVENGERS TRAINING!"
ZAKK
CHOOM
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE -- NOT RIGHT AT ALL!

THE BATTLE GROWS UGLY QUICKLY -- AS TEMPERS FLARE.
YOU CHEAP CROOK -- YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT THE AVENGERS?!
CHEAP CROOK? WHO'S AN AVENGER, YOU JUMPED-UP NEW WARRIOR?
I COULD JOIN THE FIGHT -- BUT IN THE MIDST OF THINGS, I WON'T HAVE TIME TO CONCENTRATE -- I'LL ONLY BE ABLE TO THROW SIMPLE HEXES.
BUT HERE, I CAN CONCENTRATE -- DIRECT MY POWER! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO SCAN FOR MIND-CONTROL, LIKE I DID WITH THE SQUADRON SUPREME --- *
--HARSH WORDS ARE THROWN --
YOUR FILES SAY YOU'RE A SKILLED PSYCHOLOGIST, MOONSTONE -- BUT I'LL HAVE TO REVISE THEM.
NO COMPETENT DOCTOR WOULD THINK THE PUBLIC COULD BE FOOLED TWICE BY THE SAME LIE -- OFFERED UP BY THE SAME PEOPLE!
BIG TALK, ROBOT! HOW'S YOUR WIFE, HMMM?
-- AND WHAT STARTED AS A SIMPLE MISUNDERSTANDING --
YOU FIGHT LIKE A BUNCH OF JOBRONIS, AVENGERS!
NO WONDER THE MASTERS OF EVIL TRASHED YOUR MANSION!
-- TURNS INTO SOMETHING RAW AND BRUTAL -- WITH WOUNDS OPENED THAT WON'T SOON BE HEALED --
*IN #6 -- TOM.
-- AND I DON'T SENSE ANY. BUT WHAT'S STRANGER-- I DON'T SENSE ANY EVIL INTENT FROM THE THUNDERBOLTS!
THEY DID HELP STOP ZEMO -- AND THEY STARTED OUT ACTING LIKE THEY WERE JUST DEFENDING THEMSELVES! I'VE GOT TO STOP THIS FIGHT!
I CAN SENSE AN UNDERGROUND RIVER -- RUNNING DIRECTLY BENEATH THIS COMPLEX! IF I CAN DIVERT IT -- GIVE EVERYONE A QUICK SOAKING --
BUT AS THE SCARLET WITCH CONCENTRATES --
-- HUH --?

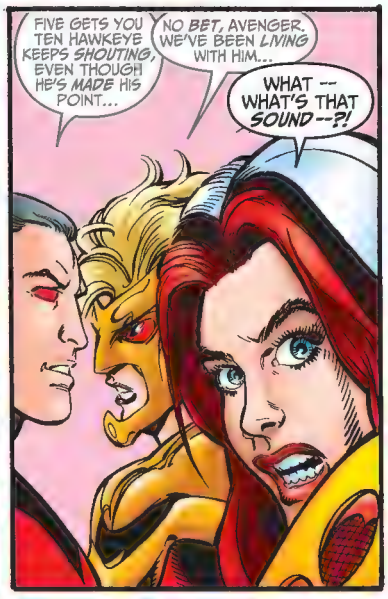
HAWKEYE!
BIG AS LIFE AND TWICE AS HANDSOME, DOLL! EVERYTHING'S COOL--
-- NO NEED TO UNLEASH WHATEVER WHAMMY YOU HAD UP YOUR SLEEVE!
THEN -- YOU'RE ALL RIGHT? YOU WEREN'T KIDNAPPED?
I'M FINE, I'M FINE -- I JUST WANTED TO SEE HOW THE KIDS HANDLED THEMSELVES AGAINST A REAL THREAT FOR A MINUTE OR TWO.
SO, C'MON GORGEOUS --
-- LET'S GO BREAK THIS SOCK HOP UP!
BUT AS HAWKEYE SPRINGS FORWARD, HE FAILS TO NOTICE --
-- THE LIGHTS THAT SUDDENLY BLINK TO LIFE BEHIND HIM -- THE MACHINES THAT BEGIN TO HUM --
AND --
YOU -- WHAT?!
CHEAP CROOK
DESTROYED THE MANSION
INCOMPETENT, AM I
YOU HEARD ME, CAP -- I'M NOT JUST A MEMBER OF THIS MERRY BUNCH OF MISCREANTS -- I'M ALSO THEIR LEADER.
I'M GIVIN' 'EM A CHANCE TO REFORM -- TO REDEEM THEMSELVES. AND YOU'VE GOT MY GUARANTEE -- THEY WON'T STEP OUT OF LINE.
THE TENSION DOWN THERE IS UNBELIEVABLE. IT WAS A MISTAKE TO LET THE FIGHT START -- AND EVEN WORSE TO LET IT RUN ON.
EVERYONE'S WORKED UP -- IN NO MOOD TO TALK --
-- BUT THEN, THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF THING HAWKEYE'S EVER BEEN SENSITIVE TO --
A MISTAKE?! LET ME TELL YOU SOMETHING, FLAG-FACE --

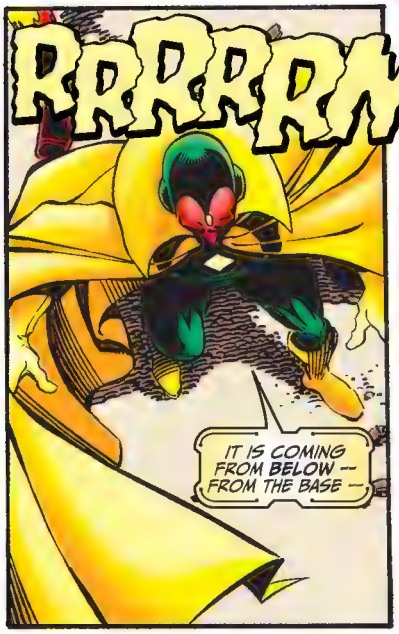
NO, HAWKEYE -- JUST LISTEN FOR A MOMENT! THEY'RE CRIMINALS -- DANGEROUS FELONS! YOU CAN'T JUST --
OH, CAN'T I? SEEMS TO ME I REMEMBER YOU TAKIN' A CHANCE ON ME, QUICKSILVER AND WANDA HERE A FEW YEARS BACK!
WE'D BEEN CROOKS -- AND WE TURNED OUT OKAY!


OR IS IT JUST ME YOU DON'T TRUST?
DON'T MAKE THIS ABOUT YOU, HAWKEYE -- IT'S ABOUT THEM! YOU'D BEEN MISGUIDED, BACK THEN -- MADE A FEW BAD CHOICES!
THESE ARE HARDENED CRIMINALS -- MURDERERS!


BUSHWAH!
THE ONLY KNOWN MURDERER IN THE WHOLE TEAM IS MACH-1 -- THE BEETLE -- AND I'VE ALREADY GOTTEN HIM TO AGREE TO TURN HIMSELF IN!

YOU -- YOU HAVE? HE AGREED TO THAT?
YES -- I DID! MUSCLE-BRAINED ME! WE'RE ALREADY MAKING ARRANGEMENTS FOR HIS PUBLIC SURRENDER!
I'M SORRY, HAWKEYE -- I DIDN'T REALIZE --


FIVE GETS YOU TEN HAWKEYE KEEPS SHOUTING, EVEN THOUGH HE'S MADE HIS POINT...
NO BET, AVENGER. WE'VE BEEN LIVING WITH HIM...
WHAT -- WHAT'S THAT SOUND--?!


RRRRRMMMMMBBBLL
IT IS COMING FROM BELOW -- FROM THE BASE --

THOSE LIGHTS!
THEY'RE COMING FROM THE PIT!

WHAT IN --?

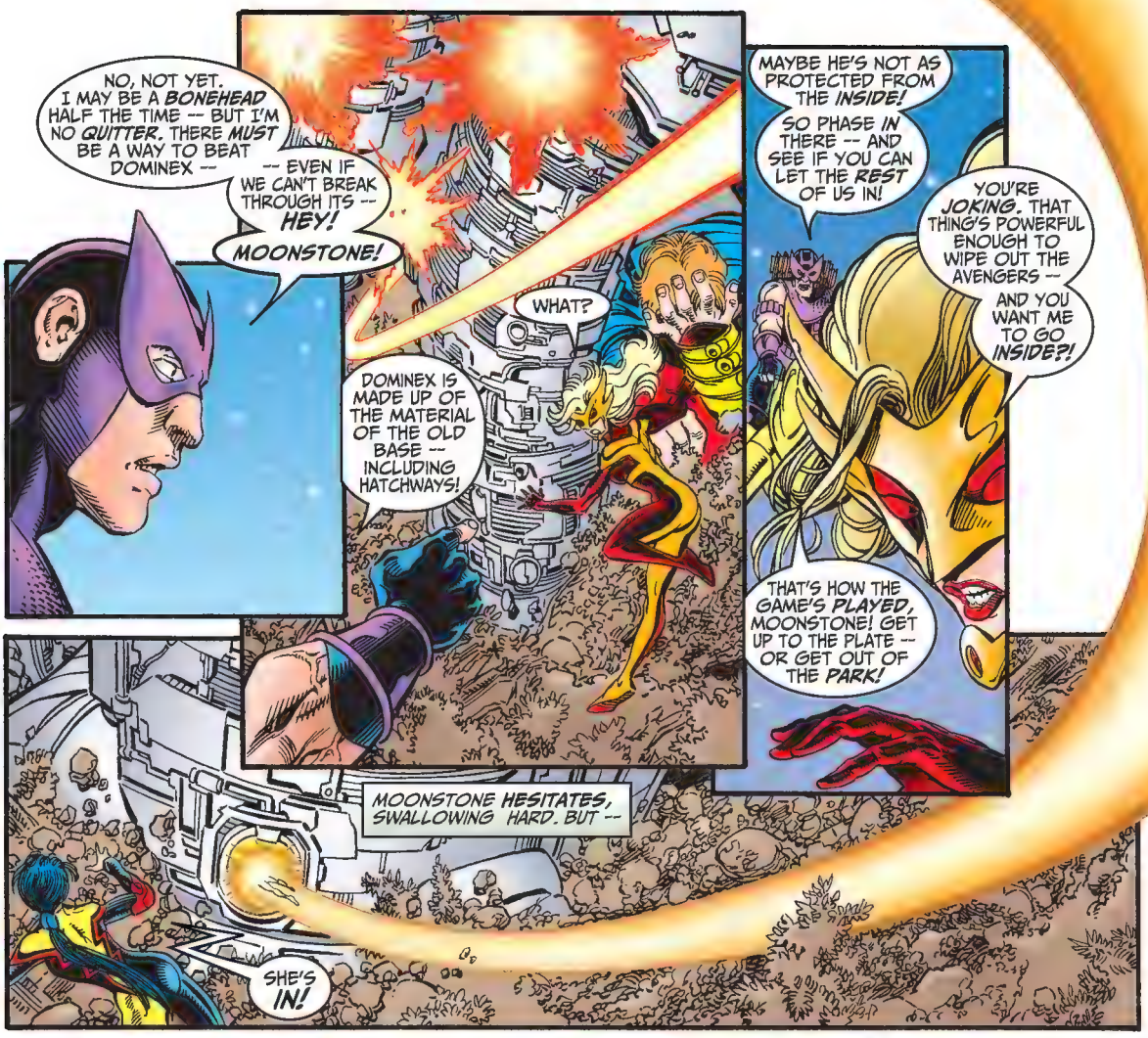
THE GROUND -- BREAKING UP! EVACUATE, EVERYONE! THOSE WHO CAN FLY, HELP THOSE WHO CAN'T!
SONGBIRD?
GOT YOU, AVENGER!
I--
AH -- THANKS, MOONSTONE! BUT -- WHAT THE HECK IS THAT -- ?
--AM--
--DOMINEX!
A-AHH!
WANDA!
WANDA!
WANDA -- GO LIMP! SIMON CAN --
SHRAWM

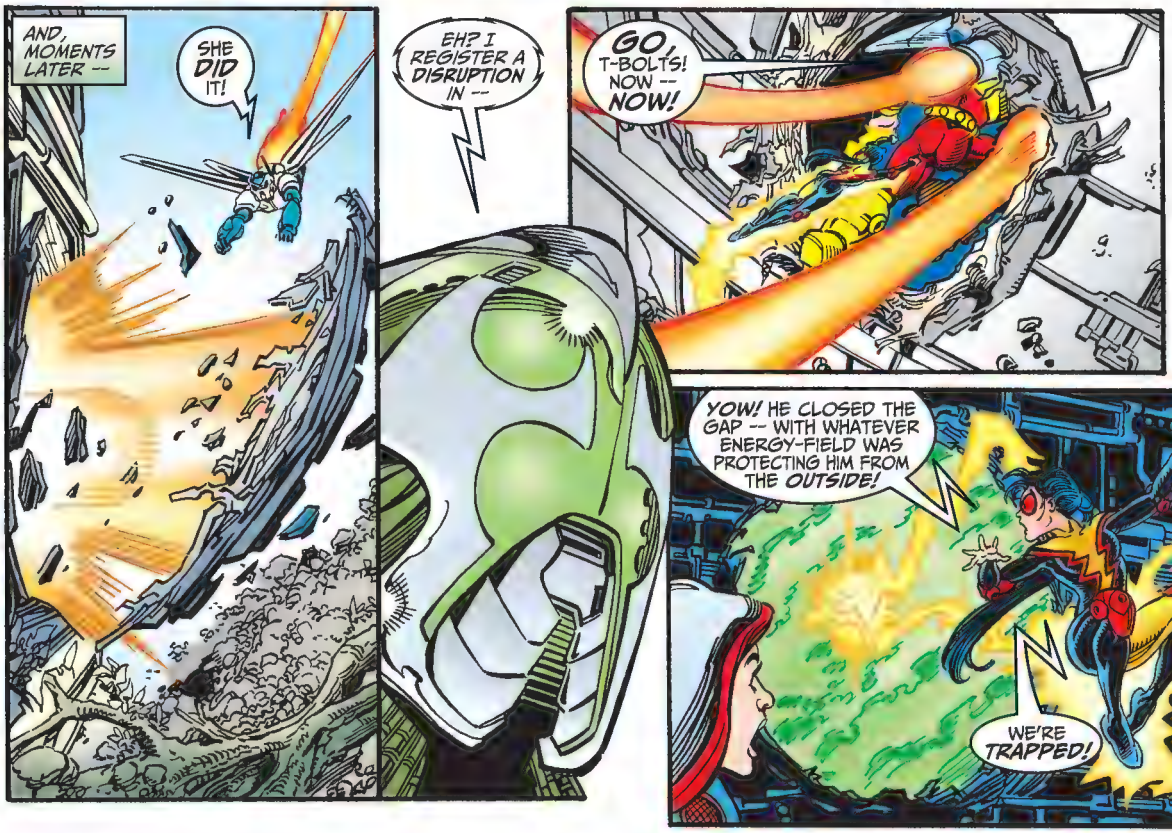
DOMINEX?
DOMINEX. THAT'S WHAT IT SAID, MACH-1.
I THOUGHT IT WAS DOMINUS...
IT WAS, FIRESTAR, IT WAS...
I SHOULD HAVE AWAKENED WHEN THE CORE COMPUTER FLED! BUT ITS LAUNCH DAMAGED ME -- LEFT ME DORMANT!
NOW, YOUR BATTLE HAS AWAKENED ME -- AND NOW I CAN CARRY OUT MY PROGRAMMING!
THIS WORLD IS THE FIRST TO RESIST THE POWER OF DOMINUS AND THE ARCANE -- AND AS SUCH, IT MUST PAY THE PRICE FOR ITS DEFIANCE --
-- IT MUST BE DESTROYED!
ACTIVATING SOMNI-RAYS.
DESTROYED? NOT A CHANCE! THUNDERBOLTS --
-- MOVE, AVENGERS! BEFORE IT --
WASSH
AND IN MOMENTS--

-- ALL IS DARK. AND STILL. AND SILENT.
AND THE DARKNESS REMAINS, WARM AND COMFORTING --
-- UNTIL --
...APTAIN...?
CAPT... AMERI...?
WH-WHAT?
CAPTAIN!
CAPTAIN -- WAKE UP!
I AM RELATIVELY INACTIVE AS FIREBIRD THESE DAYS -- BUT I WAS WITH THE WEST COAST TEAM WHEN THEY FOUGHT DOMINUS --
-- SO WHEN I HEARD, I CAME TO INVESTIGATE -- AND FOUND YOU.
"HEARD?"
UHH...
OH, MAN...
WHATEVER THOSE "SOMNI-RAYS" ARE -- THEY HIT LIKE LIGHTNING! I'M STILL WOOZY...
HOW DID YOU KNOW TO COME HERE, FIREBIRD? WHERE'S --
CAPTAIN. THE PIT -- YOU SHOULD SEE THIS.
IT IS COMPLETELY EMPTY. EVERY METAL PLATE, EVERY CIRCUIT -- GONE.
FIREBIRD!
WHAT IN --?

LOOKS LIKE WE MISSED A REEL OR TWO. WHAT'S GOING ON, BONITA?
WHERE ARE THE THUNDERBOLTS? WHERE'S DOMINEX?
IT HAS BEEN ALL OVER THE NEWS -- TELEVISION AND RADIO.
THE ROBOT IS MARCHING WEST -- HEADING FOR THE PACIFIC OCEAN. THE AIR FORCE HAS BEEN UNABLE TO CHECK ITS MARCH.
AS FOR THE THUNDERBOLTS -- THAT'S WHY I CAME HERE RATHER THAN GO AFTER -- DOMINEX, IF THAT'S ITS NAME. THEY ARE ALREADY IN PURSUIT.
ALL RIGHT, AVENGERS -- PULL YOURSELVES TOGETHER. I'M USING REMOTE ACCESS TO CALL THE QUINJET TO US.
I WANT EVERYONE ABOARD IN SECONDS. WE'RE GOING AFTER THAT THING -- NOW!
KOOM
KOOM
KKAM
RESPONSE FOUR TO RESPONSE LEADER. I'VE UNLOADED MY FULL COMPLEMENT OF MISSILES AT THAT THING --
-- AND IT'S SHRUGGING 'EM OFF LIKE THEY'RE SPITBALLS!
UNDERSTOOD, RESPONSE FOUR. BUT WE'RE ALL THAT'S AVAILABLE TO STOP THIS THING. WE'VE GOT TO KEEP AT IT, UNTIL --
-- WELL, WELL. NOW THERE'S A SIGHT FOR SORE EYES.
HAWKEYE!
IN THE FLESH AIRMAN -- OR GENERAL, OR WHATEVER. THANKS FOR DELAYING IT -- BUT MAYBE WE SHOULD GIVE IT A SHOT...
ROGER THAT, HERO. RESPONSE TEAM -- PULL BACK! THE AVENGERS ARE TAKING OVER!
AVENGERS, HUH?
GUESS HE HASN'T HEARD THE NEWS.
BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BE THE ONE TO CLUE HIM IN. T-BOLTS --

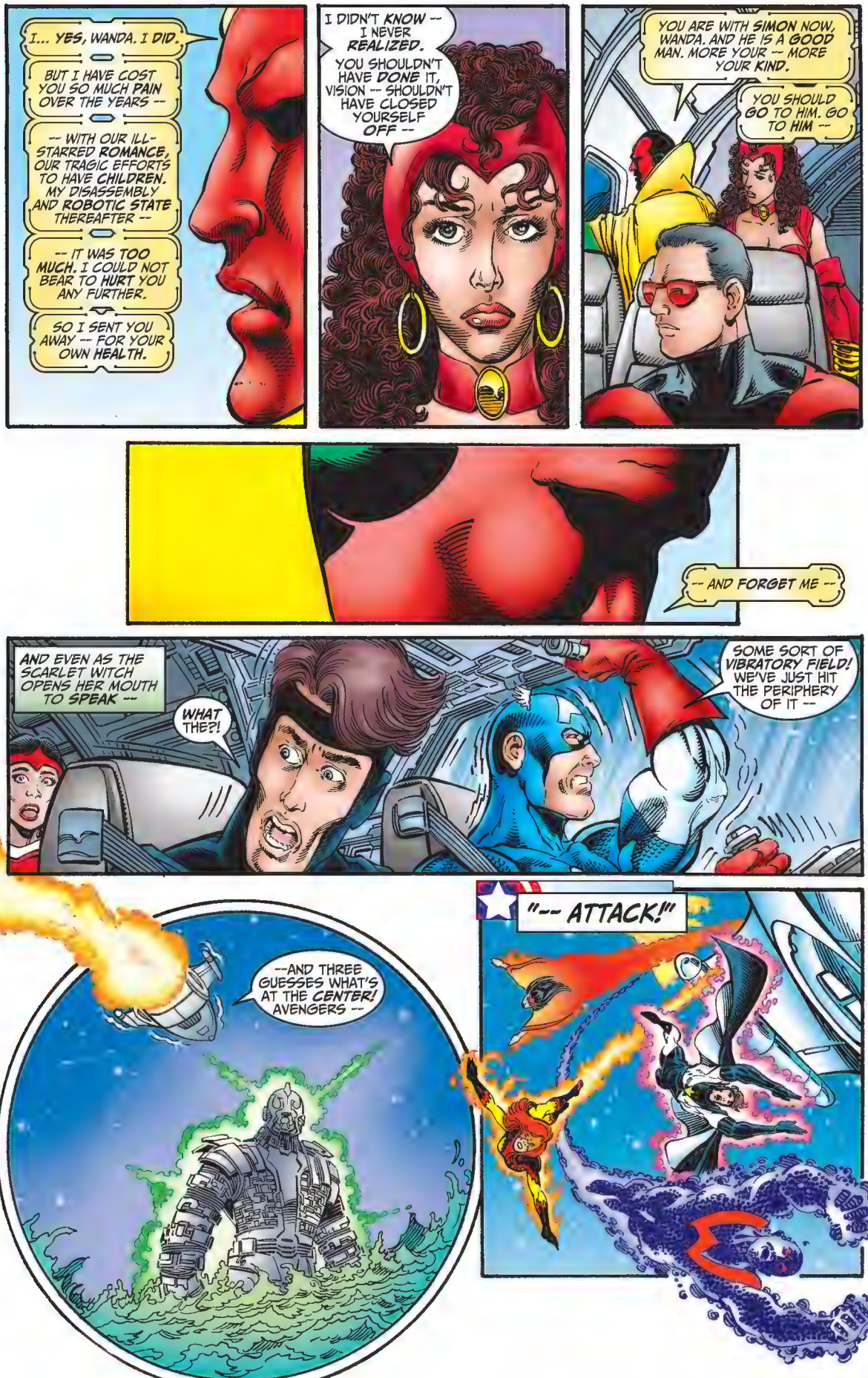
"--- LET'S DO IT"!
JUSTICE --- WHY DON'T YOU PILOT FOR A WHILE?
ME? BUT ---
YOU CHECKED OUT ON QUINJETS WEEKS AGO -- AND YOUR SCORES WERE EXCELLENT. YOU'LL DO FINE.
I WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH HANK PYM AND TONY STARK. IF WE'RE GOING UP AGAINST A ROBOT --
"--- THEIR ADVICE MAY COME IN HANDY."
KHOOM
KHOOM
KHOOM
YOU WASTE YOUR TIME, HUMANS --!
-- DOMINEX CANNOT BE BREACHED!
U-UHH!
HE'S RIGHT! SOME SORT OF ENERGY-FIELD -- PROTECTING HIS OUTER SKIN!
THAT EXPLAINS WHY WE COULD RIP THROUGH THE WALLS BEFORE -- BUT CAN'T DENT HIM NOW!
BUT IT ISN'T GONNA STOP US TRYING!
CAN'T -- CAN'T HOLD HIM BACK --!
MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE WOKEN THE AVENGERS TOO...
MAYBE, JOLT. BUT I'LL TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THAT. WHEN THE SOMNI-RAYS DIDN'T AFFECT YOUR ENHANCED METABOLISM --
--- I FIGURED IT WAS A CHANCE TO BEAT THIS THING SOLO, AND PROVE OURSELVES. I'M STARTIN' TO FEEL LIKE I MADE THE WRONG CALL.
MAYBE -- MAYBE WE SHOULD RETREAT -- GO GET MORE HELP --?


NO, NOT YET. I MAY BE A BONEHEAD HALF THE TIME -- BUT I'M NO QUITTER. THERE MUST BE A WAY TO BEAT DOMINEX --
-- EVEN IF WE CAN'T BREAK THROUGH ITS -- HEY!
MOONSTONE!
WHAT?
DOMINEX IS MADE UP OF THE MATERIAL OF THE OLD BASE -- INCLUDING HATCHWAYS!
MAYBE HE'S NOT AS PROTECTED FROM THE INSIDE!
SO PHASE IN THERE -- AND SEE IF YOU CAN LET THE REST OF US IN!
YOU'RE JOKING. THAT THING'S POWERFUL ENOUGH TO WIPE OUT THE AVENGERS --
AND YOU WANT ME TO GO INSIDE?!
THAT'S HOW THE GAME'S PLAYED, MOONSTONE! GET UP TO THE PLATE -- OR GET OUT OF THE PARK!
MOONSTONE HESITATES, SWALLOWING HARD. BUT --
SHE'S IN!


AND, MOMENTS LATER --
SHE DID IT!
EH? I REGISTER A DISRUPTION IN --
GO, T-BOLTS! NOW -- NOW!
YOW! HE CLOSED THE GAP -- WITH WHATEVER ENERGY-FIELD WAS PROTECTING HIM FROM THE OUTSIDE!
WE'RE TRAPPED!

YES -- AND TRAPPED YOU SHALL REMAIN. YOU ARE HELPLESS AGAINST THE TECHNOLOGY OF THE ARCANE -- YOU CAN ACCOMPLISH NOTHING!
OH, YEAH? WELL, IF WE'RE SO INSIGNIFICANT -- TELL US WHAT YOU'RE UP TO! YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TRIED THOSE SNOOZE-RAYS ON US AGAIN!
THE SOMNI-RAYS WERE OF LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS ON THEIR FIRST DEPLOYMENT -- I AM NOT PROGRAMMED FOR FRUITLESS BEHAVIOR.
IN ADDITION, ALL AVAILABLE ENERGY MUST BE HUSBANDED -- FOR THE BUILD-UP TO THE EXPLOSION.
EXPLOSION? WHAT EXPLOSION?
I SAID THIS PLANET MUST BE DESTROYED -- AND IT WILL BE.
I'M TRAVELING TOWARD THE MURRAY FRACTURE ZONE, WEST OF THIS CONTINENT -- AT THE EDGE OF ONE OF THIS PLANET'S TECTONIC PLATES.
THERE, WHERE THE CRUST OF YOUR EARTH IS THINNEST, I SHALL EXPLODE. THE FORCE SHALL BE ENOUGH --
-- TO RUPTURE THE PLANET LIKE A BALLOON, CAUSING TIDAL WAVES OF LAVA BENEATH ITS CRUST, CRACKING THE TECTONIC PLATES --
-- AND CAUSING SEISMIC CONVULSIONS WORLDWIDE.
IN ADDITION, MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF WATER, STONE AND EARTH, CONVERTED TO RADIOACTIVE VAPOR, WILL BE HURLED INTO THE ATMOSPHERE.
THE OCEAN-BORNE TIDAL WAVES WILL BE DESTRUCTIVE, BUT OF MINOR EFFECT IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS. FALLOUT WILL BE SHOWERED WORLDWIDE --
-- AND THE ATMOSPHERIC SHROUD WILL CAUSE A NUCLEAR WINTER, AN ICE-AGE THAT WILL DESTROY THE REST OF THE BIOSPHERE.
EARTH WILL BE CLEANSED. SUCH IS THE PRICE OF DEFYING THE ARCANE.
THIS DOESN'T SOUND GOOD...
YEP -- SO GET TO WORK, T-BOLTS! LET'S DESTROY THIS THING FROM WITHIN!
THAT -- THAT HUMMING --

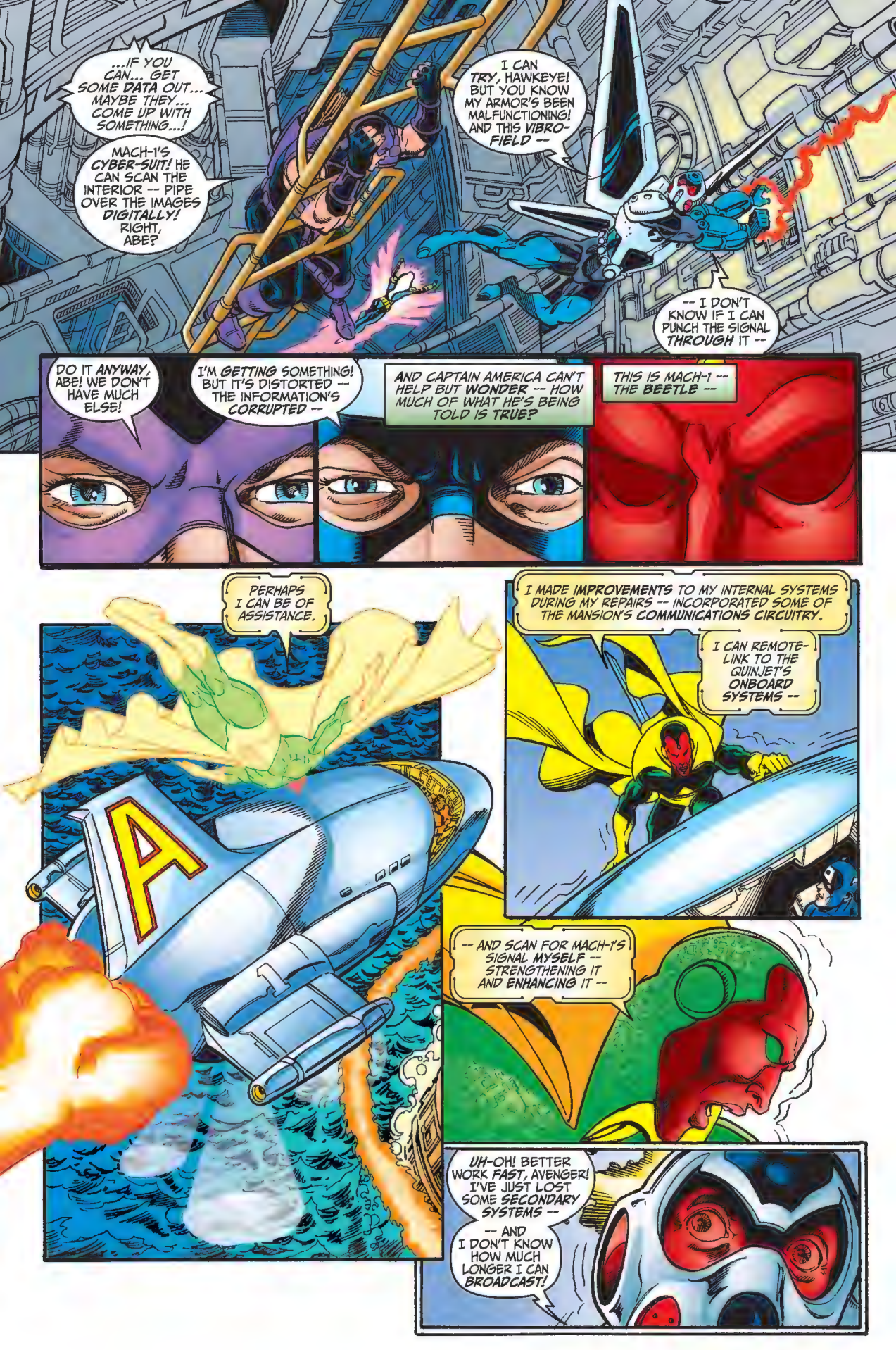
"-- IT'S ALREADY STARTED THE BUILDUP TO ITS EXPLOSION!"
OKAY -- WE'VE GOT REAL-TIME LINKS HOOKED UP TO BOTH NEW YORK AND SEATTLE. HANK, TONY -- ARE YOU THERE?
ON-LINE AND READY, CAP.
SAME HERE -- BUT I NOTICE AN OLD FRIEND OF YOURS HAS JOINED THE CREW, HANK.
IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, HANK. YOU LOOK WELL.
BONITA! WHAT A NICE SURPRISE!
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE STILL INVITED TO THE HOUSE ANY TIME YOU MAKE IT OUT EAST. BUT I DON'T SUPPOSE WE'VE GOT TIME TO CATCH UP RIGHT NOW.
YOU SAID IT WAS A ROBOT, CAP.
BUT JUDGING FROM THE PICTURES ON THE NEWS -- AND FROM WHERE IT CAME FROM, I'M BETTING IT'S NOT A COMPLETELY NEW THREAT.
YOU'D WIN -- IT'S CALLED DOMINEX, AND IT'S A PARTING GIFT FROM JUST WHO YOU THINK. IRON MAN AND DR. PYM WERE THERE, THE LAST TIME --
SO YOU MAY HAVE MORE TO CONTRIBUTE THAN JUST TECHNICAL KNOW-HOW. LET ME FILL YOU IN...
AND AS CAPTAIN AMERICA SUMMARIZES WHAT THE AVENGERS KNOW...
WANDA...?
VISION... I WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU MEANT WHEN YOU MENTIONED RURUTU.
REALLY, WANDA, YOU SHOULD NOT ATTACH TOO MUCH IMPORT TO --
DON'T, VISION. I KNOW YOU TOO WELL. YOU HAVE ALL YOUR MEMORIES BACK -- AND THE EMOTIONS THAT WENT WITH THEM. DON'T YOU?
I THOUGHT IT WAS A CHANGE FROM ONSLAUGHT -- BUT YOU DID ALL ALONG, EVEN WHEN YOU SAID YOU WEREN'T THE SAME MAN ANY MORE.
DIDN'T YOU?

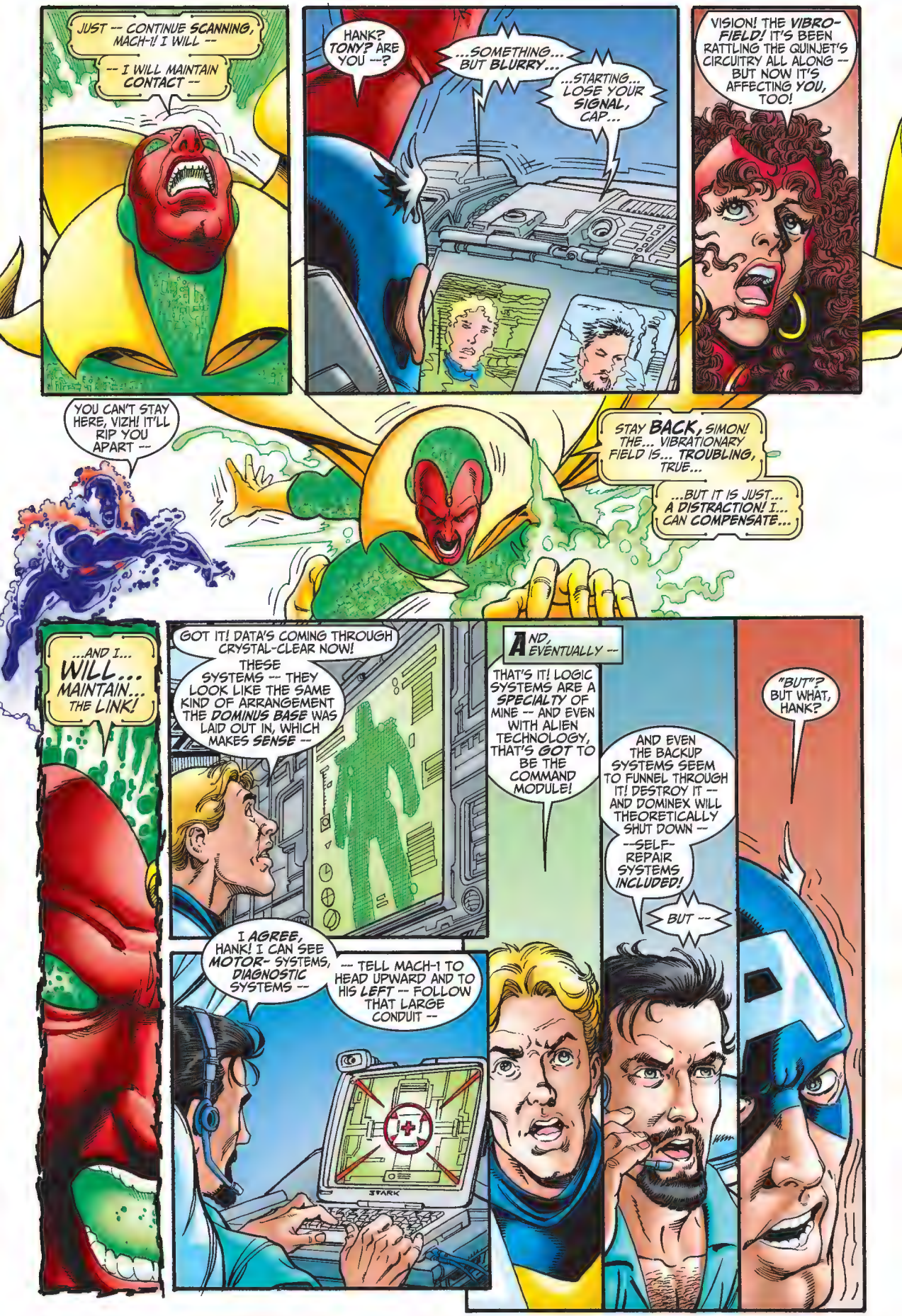

I... YES, WANDA. I DID.
BUT I HAVE COST YOU SO MUCH PAIN OVER THE YEARS --
-- WITH OUR ILL-STARRED ROMANCE, OUR TRAGIC EFFORTS TO HAVE CHILDREN. MY DISASSEMBLY AND ROBOTIC STATE THEREAFTER --
-- IT WAS TOO MUCH. I COULD NOT BEAR TO HURT YOU ANY FURTHER.
SO I SENT YOU AWAY -- FOR YOUR OWN HEALTH.
I DIDN'T KNOW -- I NEVER REALIZED.
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT, VISION -- SHOULDN'T HAVE CLOSED YOURSELF OFF --
YOU ARE WITH SIMON NOW, WANDA. AND HE IS A GOOD MAN. MORE YOUR -- MORE YOUR KIND.
YOU SHOULD GO TO HIM. GO TO HIM --
-- AND FORGET ME --
AND EVEN AS THE SCARLET WITCH OPENS HER MOUTH TO SPEAK --
WHAT THE?!
SOME SORT OF VIBRATORY FIELD! WE'VE JUST HIT THE PERIPHERY OF IT --
--AND THREE GUESSES WHAT'S AT THE CENTER! AVENGERS --
"-- ATTACK!"

BUT --
MY FLAMES -- THEY DON'T AFFECT IT!
MINE EITHER -- AND I'M CUTTING LOOSE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME! IT'S JUST NOT ENOUGH --
IT'S NOT A MATTER OF POWER, FIRESTAR! I'D THINK IT MIGHT BE, IF MY TK-BLASTS WERE JUST SPLASHING OFF --
-- BUT I CAN'T EVEN GET A TELEKINETIC GRIP ON IT! THERE'S SOMETHING INTERFERING!
I CONCUR, JUSTICE. IT IS SHEATHED IN A VARIABLE-FREQUENCY ENERGY-FIELD -- ONE I CANNOT PASS THROUGH EVEN IN INTANGIBLE FORM!
AND ITS VIBRATORY FIELD CONTINUES TO BUILD!
AND AS THE AVENGERS CONTINUE THEIR ASSAULT -- WONDER MAN DISCOVERS THAT EVEN UNDER WATER --
-- THE PROTECTIVE FIELD STILL DEFIES ASSAULT.
AND INSIDE...
WHOA!
THAT WASN'T DOMINEX! SOMETHING'S HITTING IT FROM OUTSIDE! HITTING IT HARD!
DOESN'T MATTER, KID! THEY'RE NOT GONNA GET IN -- SO IT'S STILL UP TO US!
KEEP AT IT, T-BOLTS! SMASH WHATEVER YOU CAN SEE!

WE'RE TRYING, HAWKEYE -- BUT WE'RE NOT MAKING MUCH HEADWAY!
EVERY TIME WE SMASH SOMETHING --
KSSSH
-- IT JUST REBUILDS ITSELF!
IF WE COULD FIND THE SELF-REPAIR CIRCUITS -- SHUT 'EM, DOWN --
HEY! HEY, HAWKEYE -- LOOK AT THIS!
HUH?
HEY, THE AVENGERS! I'D BETTER LET 'EM KNOW WE'RE HERE.
WHERE'S MY COMMUNICARD, ANYWAY?
AND SO, SHORTLY...
SO THAT'S... STORY, CAP! IT'S GONNA... BLOW UP, AND TAKE... WORLD WITH IT!
ANYBODY'S GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS, WE'RE IN POSITION TO TRY 'EM, FOR WHATEVER GOOD IT DOES --
-- BUT IF SO, SPEAK UP FAST -- BECAUSE I'M FRESH OUT'VE IDEAS!
HAWKEYE! THE AVENGERS HAVE SUPPLIED ME WITH A UNIFORM-RADIO!
THERE MUST BE SAFEGUARDS! DOMINUS MUST HAVE HAD A WAY TO SHUT IT DOWN, IN THE EVENT OF A MALFUNCTION!
NICE TO KNOW YOU'RE AT THE PARTY, FIREBIRD -- BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT HELPS MUCH! DOMINUS ISN'T HERE, SO --
-- HEY, NOW. WAIT A SEC...
MOONSTONE! FRONT AND CENTER -- PRONTO!

WHATEVER YOU'VE GOT IN MIND, HAWK-EYE -- I HOPE IT WORKS!
THE SENSORS SAY THE VIBRATORY FIELD'S THIRTY MILES WIDE NOW -- AND THE ROBOT'S ALMOST TO THE MURRAY ZONE! IT CAN'T BE MUCH LONGER --
OKAY, SUIT'S LOOKING GOOD -- HELMET'S KINDA LIKE NOVA'S, OR LIKE YOUR FIRST ONE. --
-- BUT IT'S GOT A CREST ON IT THAT SLOPES UP TO A POINT LIKE DOMINEX'S DOES --
THIS IS STUPID, HAWKEYE. I CAN CHANGE THE SHAPE OF MY ARMOR, CUSTOMIZE THE COLOR ALL YOU LIKE --
-- BUT I'M STILL FEMALE, AND THAT DOESN'T CHANGE! DOMINUS WAS --
DOMINUS WAS A COMPUTER! HE POSSESSED A HOST -- SO SEX DOESN'T MATTER! JUST DO IT!
OKAY...
HEAR ME, DOMINEX!
I, DOMINUS, HAVE RETURNED FROM SPACE -- HAVE POSSESSED THE BODY OF THE HUMAN MOONSTONE!
THE ARCANE PLAN A NEW ASSAULT ON THIS WORLD -- AND THUS I ORDER YOU TO CEASE ALL ACTIVITY-- NOW!
CONTRADICTORY COMMANDS -- THIS MUST BE RESOLVED. SCANNING DATABANKS FOR AUTHORIZATION PARAMETERS...
HEY -- IT'S SLOWING DOWN!
OKAY, AVENGERS -- WE BOUGHT SOME TIME, BUT IT WON'T LAST! WE NEED HELP TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO TAKE IT DOWN!
TOO BAD FOR THE WORLD YOU DIDN'T THINK OF THAT IN ARIZONA, HAWKEYE!
FOCUS ON THE PRESENT, JUSTICE! TIME ENOUGH FOR RECRIMINATIONS AFTER THE CRISIS IS PAST!
WE'VE GOT TONY STARK AND HANK PYM ON LINE, HAWKEYE --


...IF YOU CAN... GET SOME DATA OUT... MAYBE THEY... COME UP WITH SOMETHING...!
MACH-1'S CYBER-SUIT! HE CAN SCAN THE INTERIOR -- PIPE OVER THE IMAGES DIGITALLY! RIGHT, ABE?
I CAN TRY, HAWKEYE! BUT YOU KNOW MY ARMOR'S BEEN MALFUNCTIONING! AND THIS VIBRO-FIELD --
-- I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN PUNCH THE SIGNAL THROUGH IT --
DO IT ANYWAY, ABE! WE DON'T HAVE MUCH ELSE!
I'M GETTING SOMETHING! BUT IT'S DISTORTED -- THE INFORMATION'S CORRUPTED --
AND CAPTAIN AMERICA CAN'T HELP BUT WONDER -- HOW MUCH OF WHAT HE'S BEING TOLD IS TRUE?
THIS IS MACH-1 -- THE BEETLE --
PERHAPS I CAN BE OF ASSISTANCE.
I MADE IMPROVEMENTS TO MY INTERNAL SYSTEMS DURING MY REPAIRS -- INCORPORATED SOME OF THE MANSION'S COMMUNICATIONS CIRCUITRY.
I CAN REMOTE-LINK TO THE QUINJET'S ONBOARD SYSTEMS --
-- AND SCAN FOR MACH-1'S SIGNAL MYSELF -- STRENGTHENING IT AND ENHANCING IT --
UH-OH! BETTER WORK FAST, AVENGER! I'VE JUST LOST SOME SECONDARY SYSTEMS --
-- AND I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN BROADCAST!


JUST -- CONTINUE SCANNING, MACH-1! I WILL --
-- I WILL MAINTAIN CONTACT --
HANK? TONY? ARE YOU --?
...SOMETHING... BUT BLURRY...
...STARTING... LOSE YOUR SIGNAL, CAP...
VISION! THE VIBRO-FIELD! IT'S BEEN RATTLING THE QUINJET'S CIRCUITRY ALL ALONG -- BUT NOW IT'S AFFECTING YOU, TOO!
YOU CAN'T STAY HERE, VIZH! IT'LL RIP YOU APART --
STAY BACK, SIMON! THE... VIBRATIONARY FIELD IS... TROUBLING, TRUE...
...BUT IT IS JUST... A DISTRACTION! I... CAN COMPENSATE...
...AND I... WILL... MAINTAIN... THE LINK!
GOT IT! DATA'S COMING THROUGH CRYSTAL-CLEAR NOW!
THESE SYSTEMS -- THEY LOOK LIKE THE SAME KIND OF ARRANGEMENT THE DOMINUS BASE WAS LAID OUT IN, WHICH MAKES SENSE --
AND, EVENTUALLY --
THAT'S IT! LOGIC SYSTEMS ARE A SPECIALTY OF MINE -- AND EVEN WITH ALIEN TECHNOLOGY, THAT'S GOT TO BE THE COMMAND MODULE!
AND EVEN THE BACKUP SYSTEMS SEEM TO FUNNEL THROUGH IT! DESTROY IT -- AND DOMINEX WILL THEORETICALLY SHUT DOWN --
--SELF-REPAIR SYSTEMS INCLUDED!
BUT --
"BUT"? BUT WHAT, HANK?
I AGREE, HANK! I CAN SEE MOTOR- SYSTEMS, DIAGNOSTIC SYSTEMS --
-- TELL MACH-1 TO HEAD UPWARD AND TO HIS LEFT -- FOLLOW THAT LARGE CONDUIT --
STARK

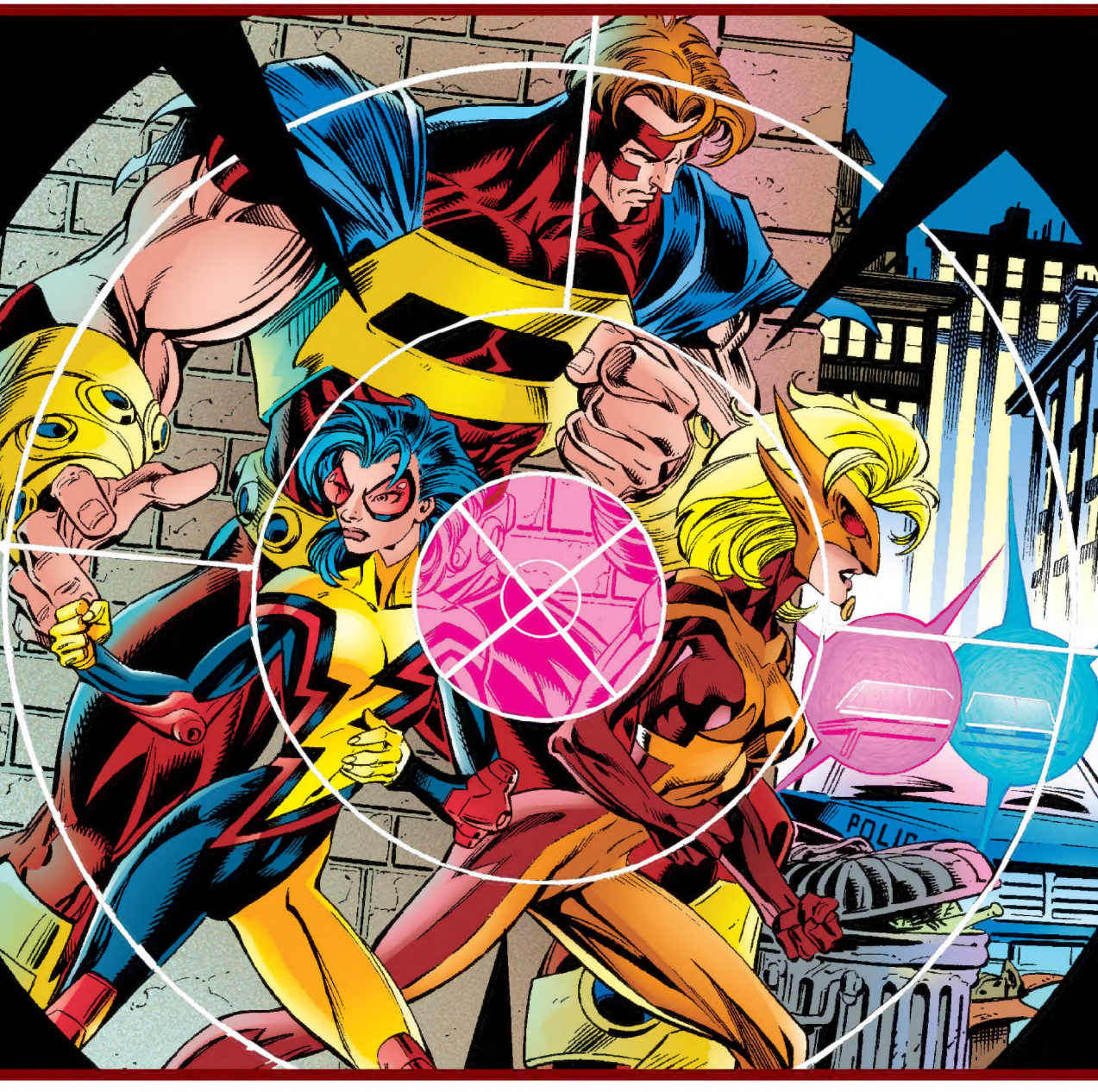
BUT IT'S THE COMMAND MODULE! IF THE T-BOLTS DON'T DESTROY IT -- THEY COULD USE IT TO TAKE CONTROL OF DOMINEX THEMSELVES!
I TRUST HAWKEYE -- BUT EVEN HEROES SCREW UP! AND WE ONLY HAVE THEIR WORD THAT THIS THING'S GOING TO BLOW UP!
DO WE REALLY WANT TO HAND CONTROL OF A WORLD-DESTROYER TO THE MASTERS OF EVIL?
IT'S REACHED THE MURRAY FRACTURE! IF WE'RE GOING TO ACT --
THEY'VE SAVED THE WORLD ONCE, HANK -- AGAINST ZEMO! IF YOU DON'T --
HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL, HANK! IF WE GIVE UP ON REDEMPTION -- AREN'T WE ALREADY LOST?
CAPTAIN AMERICA LOOKS WORDLESSLY AT THE VIEWSCREEN. HANK PYM NODS, TRANSMITS THE DATA, AND --
THERE IT IS! THAT SPHERICAL UNIT -- UP ABOVE!
THUNDERBOLTS --
--HIT IT!
AND DOMINEX SCREAMS.
SCREAMS -- AND BEGINS, SLOWLY TO TOPPLE.

AND, LATER...
THANK YOU, HAWKEYE.
AND ALL OF YOU THUNDERBOLTS. YOU DID GOOD WORK HERE.
TOLDJA.
I'LL ADMIT, I STILL HAVE RESERVATIONS -- SERIOUS RESERVATIONS -- ABOUT YOUR PLAN TO LEAD THIS TEAM, HAWKEYE --
-- AND I DON'T THINK IT'S THE RIGHT ROAD TO REDEMPTION, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE TRULY SEEKING.
BUT THE AVENGERS AREN'T POLICEMEN, AND WE'RE NOT COMPELLED TO ACT ON POLICE WARRANTS.
WE WON'T STAND IN YOUR WAY, YOU EARNED THAT MUCH TODAY, AT LEAST.
YEAH, I COULD HEAR YOU SWEATIN' AT THE END THERE...
BUT MAKE NO MISTAKE. IF WE HEAR ABOUT THE THUNDERBOLTS BREAKING THE LAW AGAIN, WE'LL HAVE NO CHOICE.
WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU DOWN. YOU INCLUDED, HAWKEYE.
WELL, YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY, ANYWAY. BUT WE DID PRETTY WELL AGAINST YOU AFTER ONLY A LITTLE TRAINING.
IMAGINE WHAT WE'LL BE AFTER A FEW MONTHS!
HAWKEYE!

YEAH, YEAH, OKAY. I JUST CAN'T BACK DOWN FROM A CHALLENGE, YOU KNOW THAT. BUT WE WON'T BE COMMITTIN' ANY CRIMES, ANYWAY.
AND LOOK -- I KNOW I'M STICKIN' MY NECK OUT, AND I KNOW HOW FAR. AND I'M NOT ASKIN' THE AVENGERS TO TAKE THE HEAT ALONG WITH ME.
SO HERE --
HAWKEYE, WHAT --?
-- LET ME MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOU.
HAWKEYE!
I DIDN'T MEAN -- I DON'T WANT TO CHASE YOU AWAY FROM THE TEAM --
DON'T SWEAT IT, BIG GUY.
THIS IS MY KINDA GAME, NOT YOURS. AND I HAVE TO ADMIT -- I'M LOOKIN' FORWARD TO IT.
THEY'RE LETTING US GO! THE AVENGERS --!
AND SO...
HAPPY TRAILS, BUCKAROOS!
I TELL YOU WHAT -- NEXT TIME ZODIAC POPS UP, WE'LL SEE WHO CAN SEE WHO CAN TAKE 'EM APART FIRST! LOSER BUYS THE BEER!
I DON'T BELIEVE IT. HAWKEYE QUIT THE AVENGERS --
-- TO JOIN THEM?!
I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE WORKING FOR THE WRONG SIDE, VANCE.
I ONLY HOPE -- THAT HAWKEYE'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT WORK --
THE LORD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS, FIRESTAR.
WHO IS TO SAY HE'S NOT WORKING THROUGH HAWKEYE NOW?
I'LL KEEP MY FINGERS CROSSED, BONITA. I THINK WE ALL WILL...
NEXT
A NEW VILLAIN! A NEW LEADER? AND OH, YEAH...
THE NEW WARRIORS!
DON'T MISS IT!

JUSTICE, LIKE LIGHTNING!

The Thunderbolts return to Earth after an interdimensional journey to Kosmos, but there's no rest for the weary as they find themselves pursued by S.H.I.E.L.D. — as well as a recovering Baron Zemo, who's out for their blood! Also, Atlas must contend with the mighty Hercules, seeking revenge for injuries suffered in years past! Guest-starring the Masters of Evil and the Avengers, and introducing the new Citizen V!



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Collecting *Thunderbolts #15-22* and *#0, Captain America & Citizen V Annual 1998* and *Avengers (1998) #12* — written by Kurt Busiek, Karl Kesel and Barbara Kesel; and illustrated by Mark Bagley and George Pérez.

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